

# Highland Center Community Impact Evaluation Report

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Carolyn W. and Charles T. Beaird Family Foundation funded the Highland Center to contract with the Institute for Nonprofit Administration and Research to conduct an extensive evaluation, the Highland Center Community Impact Report. The evaluation was conducted to better understand community well-being, service utilization, and the relationship between Highland Center participation and outcomes across multiple Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) domains. The study examined five major areas of well-being: Health, Education, Economic Stability, Neighborhood/Housing, and Social & Community Well-Being.

A total of 321 surveys were collected through in-person outreach, conducted primarily between January and March 2026 through Highland Center programs; neighborhood canvassing; and community events such as the Highland Parade. The survey included approximately 40 questions across six domains and took participants approximately 10 minutes to complete. Findings compare Highland Center participants, community respondents, and nested Highland-neighborhood subgroup comparisons.

Overall, findings suggest that Highland Center participation is associated with measurable improvements in multiple domains related to upward mobility and community well-being. Highland Center participants were significantly more likely than community respondents to report improvements in reading and computer skills, increased education or training, gaining new job skills, increased financial stability, improved housing situations, and participation in community events.

At the same time, broader structural conditions strongly shaped outcomes across nearly every domain. Income and housing stability emerged as the most consistent predictors of positive outcomes related to health, education, employment, neighborhood satisfaction, financial security, and social well-being. Respondents with higher incomes and stable housing consistently reported stronger outcomes across multiple indicators.

### **Health**

Health outcomes did not differ significantly between Highland Center participants and community respondents overall. However, important demographic differences emerged. Stable housing was significantly associated with greater access to healthy food, while exercise access differed significantly across both age and income categories. Respondents with stable housing, higher income, and younger age groups generally reported stronger health-related outcomes. These findings suggest that broader social and economic conditions continue to influence health access and well-being within the community.

### **Education**

Several statistically significant findings emerged within the Education domain. Highland Center participants were significantly more likely to report improvements in reading and computer skills, increased education or training, and greater confidence in their educational opportunities. Digital confidence differed substantially across age groups, with younger respondents reporting significantly greater confidence using computers and technology. Housing stability and income

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were also strongly associated with educational confidence and perceived educational opportunity.

These findings suggest that educational and digital skill development remain important areas of community need while also highlighting the potential role of Highland Center computer classes in supporting educational advancement and workforce readiness.

### **Economic Stability**

The Economic Stability domain produced some of the strongest statistically significant findings in the study. Highland Center participants were significantly more likely to report gaining new job skills and increased financial stability compared with community respondents.

At the same time, financial stability remained one of the most significant areas of ongoing need across the entire study. Income and housing stability consistently predicted stronger economic outcomes, including confidence in financial situations, ability to meet basic needs, job access, and perceptions of economic security.

Participant responses also highlighted the importance of practical support services such as VITA Free Tax Preparation, Basic Necessities, and Clothing Closet programming. Economic Programs generated the highest levels of participation across all Highland Center service categories.

### **Neighborhood and Housing**

Housing stability emerged as one of the strongest predictors of positive outcomes across the report. Respondents with stable housing consistently reported greater confidence in obtaining and maintaining housing, feeling safe where they live, having access to backup housing options, and living in neighborhoods they desired.

Highland Center participants were significantly more likely to report improvements in their housing situation over the previous six months. This finding suggests that community-based support services may contribute to housing progress and greater residential stability. However, housing insecurity remained a major challenge within the Highland Neighborhood subgroup, particularly among lower-income respondents.

### **Social and Community**

Within the Social and Community domain, Highland Center participants were significantly more likely to participate in community events and activities. Community participation and neighborhood connection were also strongly associated with housing stability and income. Findings suggest that the Highland Center serves not only as a service provider, but also as a community gathering space that supports social connection, neighborhood engagement, and community belonging.

### **Highland Center Experience**

The final section of the survey examined awareness of the Highland Center, program participation patterns, duration of involvement, perceived life improvements, and participant recommendations for future enhancement.

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Overall awareness of the Highland Center was high, with 87.9% of total respondents reporting they had heard of the organization. Program participation findings indicate that the Highland Center functions as a multi-service community resource hub, with the strongest engagement occurring in Economic Programs.

Participants frequently described the Highland Center as a source of practical support, stability, encouragement, and community connection. Open-ended responses highlighted themes related to financial relief, support for families and children, reduced stress, increased confidence, and improved quality of life.

One participant stated: “Improved credit score, working on purchasing a house” as evidence for the effectiveness as the home buyers class. Others described the importance of emergency support services: “Helps me in emergency situations for my baby,” and “helped me and my family with needs” as evidence for the effectiveness of the Basic Needs program. Participants also emphasized the social and emotional importance of community engagement: “I enjoy community service work and helping others,” and “makes me glad seeing people enjoying themselves.” These responses reinforce the quantitative findings showing strong engagement in Economic Programs, community participation, and neighborhood support services.

Most participant recommendations focused on expansion rather than dissatisfaction with current services. Common suggestions included increasing program availability, expanding outreach, providing additional resources, and increasing organizational capacity to meet growing community needs.

### **Community Representation and Census Comparisons**

Comparisons between the Highland Neighborhood survey subgroup and Census demographic estimates identified statistically significant differences in gender, income, and race/ethnicity distributions. The survey subgroup included significantly higher proportions of women, lower-income households, and Black / African American respondents compared with the broader Census population. However, no statistically significant age differences were observed, suggesting the survey reached a broad cross-section of adult residents across age categories.

These findings are important context for interpreting the results. The Highland Center primarily serves populations experiencing greater economic vulnerability and barriers to stability, which is reflected in the survey sample demographics.

### **Overall Conclusion**

Overall, findings suggest that the Highland Center is serving as an important neighborhood anchor institution that supports measurable progress across multiple Social Determinants of Health domains. Highland Center participation was associated with improvements in education, workforce readiness, financial stability, housing progress, and community engagement.

At the same time, the findings also demonstrate that broader structural conditions — particularly income and housing stability — remain the strongest predictors of overall well-being across nearly every domain measured in the study.

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The results highlight both the importance of community-based support systems and the continued need for investment in long-term economic and housing stability within the Highland Neighborhood community.

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## INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

### **Study Purpose**

The Carolyn W. and Charles T. Beaird Family Foundation provided funding to the Highland Center to contract with the Institute for Nonprofit Administration and Research at LSUS to conduct an extensive evaluation. The Community Impact Evaluation Report was developed to examine community well-being, service utilization, and participant outcomes across multiple Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) domains. The survey was designed to better understand the experiences of Highland Center participants and neighborhood residents related to health, education, economic stability, housing/neighborhood conditions, and social/community well-being.

The study also sought to examine whether statistically significant differences existed between Highland Center participants and Community respondents, as well as differences across demographic groups and nested neighborhood subgroup comparisons.

### **Data Collection Process**

Data collection occurred primarily between January and March 2026 through a combination of Highland Center program outreach, neighborhood canvassing, and community events such as the Highland Parade. Surveys were administered in person by staff, volunteers, and community partners.

Most surveys were completed using paper forms or direct participant assistance during community outreach activities and program participation events. The in-person approach was intentionally selected to improve accessibility and participation among populations that may experience barriers related to internet access, transportation, housing instability, or technology use.

The survey process emphasized community accessibility, relationship-building, and inclusion of residents who may not typically participate in formal evaluation activities.

### **Sample and Participants**

A total of 321 surveys were included in the final dataset. The survey included both Highland Center participants and Community respondents.

The report includes comparisons across four primary groups:

- Highland Center Participants
- Community Respondents
- Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood subgroup
- Community – Highland Neighborhood subgroup

Those who identified as living in the Highland Neighborhood were put into nested Highland Neighborhood subgroups (Highland Center - Highland Neighborhood subgroup) and (Community – Highland Neighborhood subgroup) and analyses were conducted.

### **Survey Structure**

The survey included approximately 40 questions organized into six sections:

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1. Health
2. Education
3. Economic Stability
4. Neighborhood / Housing
5. Social & Community Well-Being
6. Highland Center Experience

Most participants completed the survey in approximately 10 minutes. Questions included a combination of: Likert-scale items, yes/no items, multi-select program participation questions, demographic questions, and open-ended qualitative response items. Several questions measured perceptions of confidence, stability, access to resources, and quality of life. Additional items examined participation in Highland Center programs and perceived program impact.

### **Demographic Variables**

The survey collected demographic information including gender, race/ethnicity, age, income, housing stability, and neighborhood residency. These demographic variables were used to examine statistically significant differences across participant groups and Social Determinants of Health domains.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Independent samples t-tests and chi-square analyses were used to examine statistically significant differences between groups and demographic categories. Statistical significance was evaluated using a threshold of  $p < .05$ .

Analyses were conducted across:

- participant groups
- demographic variables
- nested Highland Neighborhood subgroup comparisons

For Likert-scale items, low/high categories were created to simplify interpretation and reporting. Mean scores and percentage distributions were calculated for all major outcome measures. Multi-select program participation items were analyzed using program selection frequencies. Because respondents could select multiple programs, totals exceeded the number of respondents.

### **Census Comparison Analysis**

Additional analyses compared the Highland Neighborhood subgroup with available Census demographic estimates for gender, income, age, and race/ethnicity.

Chi-square goodness-of-fit analyses were conducted to determine whether the observed survey distributions differed significantly from expected Census population distributions. These analyses were intended to provide context regarding representativeness and population reach within the Highland Neighborhood community.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Open-ended responses were reviewed and grouped into major themes related to:

- financial relief

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- housing stability
- family support
- community connection
- emotional well-being
- quality of life
- program improvement recommendations

Representative participant quotes provide additional context and illustrate participant experiences in their own words.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, the survey sample was not fully representative of the broader Highland Neighborhood population across all demographic categories. Compared with Census estimates, the survey subgroup included significantly higher proportions of women, lower-income households, and Black / African American respondents.

Second, data collection relied primarily on in-person convenience sampling through Highland Center programs, outreach activities, and community events. As a result, findings may reflect populations more likely to engage with community services and neighborhood activities.

Third, the study relied primarily on self-reported perceptions and experiences rather than independently verified outcome measures.

Finally, because the study design was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, findings should be interpreted as associations rather than direct evidence of causation.

Despite these limitations, the study provides important insight into community conditions, participant experiences, and the potential role of the Highland Center in supporting neighborhood well-being and upward mobility.

## FINDINGS: DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey collected demographic information. Table 1 shows the breakdown of survey respondents by Highland Center participants and community members. More than two-thirds of participants (69%) were Highland Center participants.

Table 1 Sample

| <b>Group</b>                           | <b>N</b> | <b>%</b> |
|----------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center<br/>(Cleaned_H)</i> | 222      | 69.2%    |
| <i>Community (Cleaned_N)</i>           | 99       | 30.8%    |
| <i>Total Sample</i>                    | 321      | 100%     |

Table 2 shows the gender make-up of survey respondents. Women represented approximately two-thirds of the combined sample, with men comprising roughly one-third.

Table 2 Gender

| <b>Gender</b>                             | <b>N</b> | <b>%</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>Female</i>                             | 214      | 66.7%    |
| <i>Male</i>                               | 96       | 29.9%    |
| <i>Non-binary / Other</i>                 | 4        | 1.2%     |
| <i>Prefer not to answer /<br/>Missing</i> | 7        | 2.2%     |

Table 3 shows the income level of survey respondents with income groupings collapsed into three categories. A majority of respondents reported household income below \$40,000.

Table 3 Income

| <b>Income<br/>Category</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>%</b> |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>&lt;\$40K</i>           | 179      | 55.8%    |
| <i>\$40K–\$79K</i>         | 93       | 29.0%    |
| <i>\$80K+</i>              | 49       | 15.3%    |

Table 4 shows the age categories of survey respondents. Adults ages 45–64 represented the largest age group.

Table 4 Age

| <b>Age<br/>Category</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>%</b> |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>18–34</i>            | 89       | 27.7%    |
| <i>35–44</i>            | 63       | 19.6%    |
| <i>45–64</i>            | 118      | 36.8%    |
| <i>65+</i>              | 51       | 15.9%    |

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Table 5 shows the race/ethnicity categories of survey respondents. The sample was majority Black / African American.

Table 5 Race / Ethnicity

| <b><i>Race / Ethnicity</i></b>  | <b><i>N</i></b> | <b><i>%</i></b> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Black / African American</i> | 193             | 60.1%           |
| <i>White</i>                    | 93              | 29.0%           |
| <i>Other / Multiracial</i>      | 35              | 10.9%           |

Table 6 shows the housing stability responses. Most respondents reported having stable housing, though a meaningful minority reported instability.

Table 6 Housing Stability

| <b><i>Housing Status</i></b> | <b><i>N</i></b> | <b><i>%</i></b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>        | 252             | 78.5%           |
| <i>Unstable Housing</i>      | 55              | 17.1%           |
| <i>Missing</i>               | 14              | 4.4%            |

Table 7 breakdown those of the survey respondents live in the Highland Neighborhood.

Table 7. Highland Neighborhood Subgroup

| <b><i>Subgroup</i></b>                         | <b><i>N</i></b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 56              |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 19              |
| <i>Total Highland Neighborhood Sample</i>      | 75              |

The combined sample reflects a predominantly female, racially diverse, lower-income population with strong representation from Black / African American residents and middle-aged adults. Most respondents reported stable housing, though housing instability remained an important issue for a sizable minority. These characteristics provide critical context for interpreting results across the Social Determinants of Health domains.

SECTION 1: HEALTH

Highland Center Participants and Community members were asked to complete five questions regarding their health. Percentages are calculated based on valid responses for each question; therefore, subgroup sample sizes (N) vary slightly across questions.

QUESTION 1.1

Respondents were asked, *How often do you have healthy food that you can afford?* Response options were: 1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Most of the time, 4 = Always

Findings are separated between Highland Center participants and community members who have not participated in Highland Center programs. The third category includes a proportion from Highland Center that reside in self-identified Highland Neighborhood, and the fourth category includes a proportion from Community members who reside Highland Neighborhood.

Table 1.1 Healthy Food Access Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                       | <b>Mean<br/>Score</b> | <b>Low<br/>(1-2)</b> | <b>High<br/>(3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                             | 3.71                  | 9.7%                 | 90.3%                 | 124      |
| <i>Community</i>                                   | 3.80                  | 6.7%                 | 93.3%                 | 60       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland<br/>Neighborhood</i> | 3.74                  | 8.9%                 | 91.1%                 | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>           | 3.61                  | 15.8%                | 84.2%                 | 19       |

As shown in Table 1.1, access to healthy food is high across all groups, with most respondents reporting “most of the time” or “always.” Eating healthy food did not differ significantly across participant groups and no statistically significant differences were observed between Highland Center participants and Community respondents overall or within the Highland Neighborhood subset.

When comparing healthy food access across demographic characteristics (gender, income, age, race, housing stability, and highland neighborhood subgroup), there was one statistically significant result as shown in table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Demographic Comparisons: Housing Stability

| <b>Housing<br/>Stability</b> | <b>Mean<br/>Score</b> | <b>Low<br/>(1-2)</b> | <b>High<br/>(3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>        | 3.78                  | 7.1%                 | 92.9%                 | 171      |
| <i>Unstable<br/>Housing</i>  | 3.46                  | 18.9%                | 81.1%                 | 37       |

Statistically significant (p < .05)

| <b>Test<br/>Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significa<br/>nt</b> |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| <i>t-test</i>        | .014           | Yes                     |

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Respondents with stable housing reported significantly having healthy food more often than those experiencing unstable housing.

### QUESTION 1.2

Respondents were asked: How healthy do you feel in your body? Response options: 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent

Table 1.3 Healthy Body Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 3.22              | 29.7%            | 70.3%             | 222      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.29              | 26.3%            | 73.7%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 3.11              | 31.9%            | 68.1%             | 137      |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 3.06              | 33.3%            | 66.7%             | 36       |

As shown in Table 1.3, no statistically significant differences were observed between Highland Center participants and Community respondents overall or within the Highland Neighborhood subset. When comparing healthy body responses across demographic characteristics, there was one statistically significant result as shown in table 1.4.

Table 1.4 Demographic Comparisons: Race / Ethnicity

| <b>Race Group</b>               | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Black / African American</i> | 3.09              | 33.1%            | 66.9%             | 193      |
| <i>White</i>                    | 3.44              | 21.8%            | 78.2%             | 93       |
| <i>Other / Multiracial</i>      | 3.26              | 28.0%            | 72.0%             | 39       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | .001           | Yes                |

The only statistically significant demographic difference was race/ethnicity with White respondents reporting feeling more healthy than other groups.

### QUESTION 1.3

Respondents were asked, Do you have a place where you could exercise? Response options: Yes / No.

Table 1.5 Access to Exercise Responses

| <b>Group</b>           | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i> | 66.8%        | 33.2%       | 220      |

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|                                                |       |       |     |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| <i>Community</i>                               | 68.0% | 32.0% | 97  |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 63.5% | 36.5% | 137 |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 58.3% | 41.7% | 36  |

As shown in Table 1.5, no statistically significant differences were observed between Highland Center participants and Community respondents overall or within the Highland Neighborhood subsets. When comparing exercise access across demographic characteristic, there were meaningful demographic differences, as shown in table 1.6 and 1.7.

Table 1.6 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b><i>Income Group</i></b> | <b><i>% Yes</i></b> | <b><i>% No</i></b> | <b><i>N</i></b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <i>&lt;\$40K</i>           | 56.2%               | 43.8%              | 176             |
| <i>\$40–79K</i>            | 78.9%               | 21.1%              | 95              |
| <i>\$80K+</i>              | 88.4%               | 11.6%              | 69              |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b><i>Test Type</i></b> | <b><i>p-value</i></b> | <b><i>Significant</i></b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i>       | .001                  | Yes                       |

Table 1.7 Demographic Comparisons – Age

| <b><i>Age Group</i></b> | <b><i>% Yes</i></b> | <b><i>% No</i></b> | <b><i>N</i></b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <i>18–34</i>            | 73.3%               | 26.7%              | 72              |
| <i>35–44</i>            | 50.0%               | 50.0%              | 56              |
| <i>45–64</i>            | 70.2%               | 29.8%              | 84              |
| <i>65+</i>              | 75.4%               | 24.6%              | 85              |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b><i>Test Type</i></b> | <b><i>p-value</i></b> | <b><i>Significant</i></b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i>       | .040                  | Yes                       |

Differences were observed by income and age, with higher-income and 18-34 and over 65 age groups reporting substantially greater access to exercise.

## QUESTION 1.4

Respondents were asked, In the past 6 months, have you had a health check-up? Response options: Yes / No

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Table 1.8 Recent Health Check-Up Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                       | <b>%<br/>Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                             | 80.0%            | 20.0%       | 220      |
| <i>Community</i>                                   | 71.4%            | 28.6%       | 98       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland<br/>Neighborhood</i> | 76.6%            | 23.4%       | 137      |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>           | 63.9%            | 36.1%       | 36       |

As shown in table 1.8 health check ups did not differ significantly across participant groups and no statistically significant differences were observed between Highland Center participants and Community respondents overall or within the Highland Neighborhood subsets. However, one significant demographic difference was present, as shown in Tables 1.9.

Table 1.9 Demographic Comparisons - Race / Ethnicity

| <b>Race Group</b>                   | <b>%<br/>Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Black / African<br/>American</i> | 82.8%            | 17.2%       | 163      |
| <i>White</i>                        | 65.9%            | 34.1%       | 85       |
| <i>Other / Multiracial</i>          | 85.0%            | 15.0%       | 20       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test<br/>Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i>    | .007           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by race/ethnicity, with White respondents reporting lower preventive healthcare utilization than other groups.

## QUESTION 1.5

In the past 6 months, have you improved your health (food or exercise)? Response options: Yes / No

Table 1.10 Health Improvement Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                       | <b>%<br/>Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                             | 70.7%            | 29.3%       | 222      |
| <i>Community</i>                                   | 69.4%            | 30.6%       | 98       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland<br/>Neighborhood</i> | 67.9%            | 32.1%       | 137      |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>           | 58.3%            | 41.7%       | 36       |

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As shown in Table 1.10, reported health improvement was similar across groups. Differences were not statistically significant.

### Summary of Section 1

Health outcomes across the sample are generally strong, with the majority of respondents reporting access to healthy food, opportunities for exercise, and recent engagement with healthcare services. However, important differences emerge when examining structural and demographic factors.

No statistically significant differences were observed across groups for healthy food access, self-reported health, or health improvement. These outcomes are relatively consistent across Highland Center participants, community members, and Highland-area residents subsets.

Three areas show meaningful variation.

- *First, access to healthy food is associated with housing stability.* Those who have stable housing have access to healthy food.
- *Second, access to exercise is associated with both income and age,* with lower-income individuals and middle-aged individuals each reporting substantially reduced access.
- *Third, how healthy people feel and having had a recent health check-up is associated with race/ethnicity,* with White individuals feeling healthier than other racial and ethnic groups but being less likely to report having had a recent health check-up.

Overall, findings indicate that while baseline health conditions are relatively stable across groups, disparities in access to exercise and preventive healthcare are driven by income, housing, and age.

## SECTION 2: EDUCATION

Highland Center participants and community members were asked five questions regarding their access and utilization of education. Percentages are calculated based on valid responses for each question; therefore, sample sizes (N) vary slightly across questions.

### QUESTION 2.1

How do you feel about your reading skills? Response options: 1 = Not Confident, 2 = Not Sure, 3 = Confident, 4 = Very Confident

Table 2.1 Reading Skills Confidence Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 3.18              | 24.6%            | 75.4%             | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.11              | 27.3%            | 72.7%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 3.14              | 26.8%            | 73.2%             | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 2.95              | 36.8%            | 63.2%             | 19       |

As shown in table 2.1, confidence in reading skills did not differ significantly across participant groups and no statistically significant differences were observed between Highland Center participants and Community respondents overall or within the Highland Neighborhood subsets. However, there were significant demographic differences as shown in Tables 2.2 – 2.4.

Table 2.2 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 2.96              | 34.1%            | 65.9%             | 179      |
| \$40–79K            | 3.23              | 21.5%            | 78.5%             | 93       |
| \$80K+              | 3.47              | 12.7%            | 87.3%             | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | .004           | Yes                |

Table 2.3 Demographic Comparisons - Age

| <b>Age Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| 18–34            | 3.05              | 28.1%            | 71.9%             | 89       |
| 35–44            | 3.11              | 26.9%            | 73.1%             | 63       |
| 45–64            | 3.21              | 22.0%            | 78.0%             | 118      |
| 65+              | 3.34              | 17.0%            | 83.0%             | 47       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

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| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | .031           | Yes                |

Table 2.4 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Stable Housing           | 3.27              | 20.6%            | 79.4%             | 252      |
| Unstable Housing         | 2.82              | 41.8%            | 58.2%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| t-test           | .012           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income, age, and housing stability. Those with higher income, older respondents, and those with stable housing reported higher confidence in their reading skills. These findings suggest that educational confidence is more strongly shaped by structural and life-course factors than by group status alone.

## QUESTION 2.2

How do you feel about using a computer? Response options: 1 = Not Confident, 2 = Not Sure, 3 = Confident, 4 = Very Confident

Table 2.5 Computer Confidence Responses

| <b>Group</b>                            | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Highland Center                         | 3.04              | 31.2%            | 68.8%             | 221      |
| Community                               | 3.09              | 29.3%            | 70.7%             | 99       |
| Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood | 2.98              | 33.9%            | 66.1%             | 56       |
| Community – Highland Neighborhood       | 2.79              | 42.1%            | 57.9%             | 19       |

Confidence using a computer did not differ significantly across participant groups. However, when comparing across demographic areas, there were several significant differences.

Table 2.6 Demographic Comparisons – Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 2.71              | 45.8%            | 54.2%             | 179      |
| \$40–79K            | 3.19              | 24.7%            | 75.3%             | 93       |

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\$80K+ | 3.52 | 11.3% | 88.7% | 71

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | <.001          | Yes                |

Table 2.7 Demographic Comparisons - Age

| <b>Age Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| 18-34            | 3.38              | 16.9%            | 83.1%             | 89       |
| 35-44            | 3.24              | 22.2%            | 77.8%             | 63       |
| 45-64            | 2.93              | 35.6%            | 64.4%             | 118      |
| 65+              | 2.31              | 61.7%            | 38.3%             | 47       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | <.001          | Yes                |

Table 2.8 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Stable Housing           | 3.16              | 26.2%            | 73.8%             | 252      |
| Unstable Housing         | 2.58              | 56.4%            | 43.6%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| t-test           | .006           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income, age, and housing stability. Those with higher incomes, younger, and those with stable housing reported higher confidence in using a computer.

## QUESTION 2.3

In the past 6 months, have you improved your reading or computer skills? Response options: Yes / No

Table 2.9 Skill Improvement

| <b>Group</b>    | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Highland Center | 72.1%        | 27.9%       | 222      |
| Community       | 60.4%        | 39.6%       | 99       |

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|                                                |       |       |    |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|----|
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 69.6% | 30.4% | 56 |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 52.6% | 47.4% | 19 |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

Table 2.10 Group Comparison Tests

| <b>Comparison</b>                            | <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Highland Center vs Community</i>          | Chi-square       | .038           | Yes                |
| <i>Highland Neighborhood HC vs Community</i> | Chi-square       | .047           | Yes                |

As shown in tables 2.9 and 2.10, recent improvement in reading or computer skills differed significantly across participant groups. Highland Center participants were more likely than Community respondents to report recent skill improvement, both overall and within the Highland Neighborhood subset. No statistically significant demographic differences were observed.

## QUESTION 2.4

Do you feel like you can get the education that you want for yourself and/or your family?

Response options: 1 = Not Confident, 2 = Not Sure, 3 = Confident, 4 = Very Confident

Table 2.11 Education Access Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 3.09              | 27.5%            | 72.5%             | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.03              | 29.3%            | 70.7%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 3.01              | 30.4%            | 69.6%             | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 2.84              | 36.8%            | 63.2%             | 19       |

Confidence in obtaining desired education did not differ significantly across participant groups. However, demographic comparisons revealed several significant differences.

Table 2.12 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 2.86              | 38.0%            | 62.0%             | 179      |
| \$40-79K            | 3.18              | 23.7%            | 76.3%             | 93       |
| \$80K+              | 3.36              | 15.5%            | 84.5%             | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | .002           | Yes                |

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Table 2.13 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>    | 3.18              | 22.6%            | 77.4%             | 252      |
| <i>Unstable Housing</i>  | 2.71              | 43.6%            | 56.4%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>t-test</i>    | .018           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Respondents with higher income and higher housing stability had increased access to education.

## QUESTION 2.5

In the past 6 months, have you increased your education or training? Response options: Yes / No

Table 2.14 Increased Education or Training

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 68.0%        | 32.0%       | 222      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 55.6%        | 44.4%       | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 66.1%        | 33.9%       | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 47.4%        | 52.6%       | 19       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

Table 2.15 Group Comparison Tests

| <b>Comparison</b>                            | <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Highland Center vs Community</i>          | Chi-square       | .041           | Yes                |
| <i>Highland Neighborhood HC vs Community</i> | Chi-square       | .049           | Yes                |

Recent increases in education or training differed significantly across participant groups. As shown in tables 2.14 & 2.15, Highland Center participants were more likely than Community respondents to report increased education or training, both overall and within the Highland Neighborhood subset.

## Summary Section 2

In summary, section 2 examined confidence in reading and computer skills, recent improvements in those skills, perceived access to education, and increases in education or training over the past six months.

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Overall, respondents report strong confidence in their reading skills, with the majority indicating they are confident or very confident. Confidence using a computer is also relatively high, though more variation exists across respondents. Differences between Highland Center participants, community members, and Highland-area residents are not statistically significant for these baseline skill measures, indicating that foundational literacy and computer confidence are relatively consistent across groups.

More meaningful differences emerge in change-oriented outcomes. *Highland Center participants are more likely to report that they have improved their reading or computer skills in the past six months compared to both community members and Highland-area residents. They are also more likely to report that they have increased their education or training during this time period.* These findings represent clear and measurable program outcomes.

Confidence using a computer is associated with age, with *older adults reporting substantially lower levels of confidence*. Those with higher incomes, younger, and those with stable housing reported higher confidence in using a computer.

Perceived access to education is generally high across all groups, with most respondents indicating that they feel they can obtain the education they want for themselves or their families.

Overall, findings indicate that while baseline educational skills are strong across the sample, the most meaningful differences occur in computer skills and increased education and training. These outcomes are influenced by age and broader structural conditions, with Highland Center participation showing a clear positive impact on recent learning and training.

### SECTION 3: ECONOMIC STABILITY

Participants were asked questions about their basic needs, employment status, financial situation, job access, job skills, and financial stability. Percentages are calculated based on valid responses for each question; therefore, sample sizes (N) vary slightly across questions.

#### QUESTION 3.1

How often do you have your basic needs met (like clothing, essential items, food)? Response options: 1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Most of the time, 4 = Always

Table 3.1 Basic Needs Met Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 3.19              | 23.9%            | 76.1%             | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.24              | 21.2%            | 78.8%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 3.08              | 28.6%            | 71.4%             | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 3.00              | 31.6%            | 68.4%             | 19       |

As shown in Table 3.1, Having basic needs met did not differ significantly across participant groups. When comparing the results across demographics a few statistically significant comparisons were made.

Table 3.2 Demographic Comparisons – Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 2.94              | 34.1%            | 65.9%             | 179      |
| \$40–79K            | 3.29              | 18.3%            | 81.7%             | 93       |
| \$80K+              | 3.48              | 11.3%            | 88.7%             | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | <.001          | Yes                |

Table 3.3 Demographic Comparisons – Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>    | 3.33              | 18.7%            | 81.3%             | 252      |
| <i>Unstable Housing</i>  | 2.71              | 43.6%            | 56.4%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
|                  |                |                    |

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|               |      |     |
|---------------|------|-----|
| <i>t-test</i> | .003 | Yes |
|---------------|------|-----|

As shown in Table 3.2 & 3.3 significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Those with higher incomes and stable housing reported having their basic needs being met.

## QUESTION 3.2

Are you currently employed? Response options: Yes / No

Table 3.4 Currently Employed Responses

| <i>Group</i>                                       | <i>%<br/>Yes</i> | <i>% No</i> | <i>N</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                             | 58.1%            | 41.9%       | 222      |
| <i>Community</i>                                   | 62.6%            | 37.4%       | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland<br/>Neighborhood</i> | 53.6%            | 46.4%       | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>           | 57.9%            | 42.1%       | 19       |

As shown in Table 3.4, most respondents report being employed, though Highland neighborhood residents report lower employment rates. Differences across groups are not statistically significant. There were statistically significant differences across demographic comparisons.

Table 3.5 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <i>Income<br/>Group</i> | <i>%<br/>Yes</i> | <i>% No</i> | <i>N</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>&lt;\$40K</i>        | 47.5%            | 52.5%       | 179      |
| <i>\$40–79K</i>         | 67.7%            | 32.3%       | 93       |
| <i>\$80K+</i>           | 73.2%            | 26.8%       | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <i>Test<br/>Type</i> | <i>p-value</i> | <i>Significant</i> |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i>    | .012           | Yes                |

Table 3.6 Demographic Comparisons - Age

| <i>Age<br/>Group</i> | <i>%<br/>Yes</i> | <i>% No</i> | <i>N</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>18–34</i>         | 62.9%            | 37.1%       | 89       |
| <i>35–44</i>         | 74.6%            | 25.4%       | 63       |
| <i>45–64</i>         | 61.0%            | 39.0%       | 118      |
| <i>65+</i>           | 29.8%            | 70.2%       | 47       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <i>Test<br/>Type</i> | <i>p-value</i> | <i>Significant</i> |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|
|                      |                |                    |

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|                   |      |     |
|-------------------|------|-----|
| <i>Chi-square</i> | .001 | Yes |
|-------------------|------|-----|

Table 3.7 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>    | 64.7%        | 35.3%       | 252      |
| <i>Unstable Housing</i>  | 34.5%        | 65.5%       | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b>  | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i> | .021           | Yes                |

As shown in Tables 3.5-3.7, significant differences were observed by income, age, and housing stability. Those with higher income and stable housing were more likely to report currently being employed, as well as higher percentages of those in the 35-44 also reporting currently being employed.

## QUESTION 3.3

How do you feel about your money situation? Response options: 1 = Not Confident, 2 = Not Sure, 3 = Confident, 4 = Very Confident

Table 3.8 Money Situation Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 2.94              | 39.2%            | 60.8%             | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.01              | 36.4%            | 63.6%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 2.79              | 44.6%            | 55.4%             | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 2.74              | 47.4%            | 52.6%             | 19       |

As shown in Table 3.8, confidence in one's financial situation was moderate across groups, with Highland zip code residents reporting lower confidence. Differences were not statistically significant at the group level. When comparing response across demographics there were several statistically significant areas.

Table 3.9 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>&lt;\$40K</i>    | 2.61              | 52.0%            | 48.0%             | 179      |
| <i>\$40-79K</i>     | 3.11              | 28.0%            | 72.0%             | 93       |
| <i>\$80K+</i>       | 3.42              | 16.9%            | 83.1%             | 71       |

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Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | <.001          | Yes                |

Table 3.10 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Stable Housing           | 3.15              | 27.8%            | 72.2%             | 252      |
| Unstable Housing         | 2.34              | 61.8%            | 38.2%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| t-test           | .002           | Yes                |

As shown in tables 3.9 and 3.10 significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Those who had higher income and stable housing reported feeling better about their money situation.

## QUESTION 3.4

Do you have access to the kind of jobs that you want for yourself and/or your family? Response options: Yes / No

Table 3.11 Access to Desired Jobs Responses

| <b>Group</b>                            | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Highland Center Community               | 61.3%        | 38.7%       | 222      |
| Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood | 65.7%        | 34.3%       | 99       |
| Community – Highland Neighborhood       | 57.1%        | 42.9%       | 56       |
| Community – Highland Neighborhood       | 52.6%        | 47.4%       | 19       |

As shown in Table 3.11, the majority of respondents indicated access to desired jobs and differences are not statistically significant. Those in the Highland Neighborhood reported lower percentages of access to the kind of jobs they want. When comparing responses across demographics, there were several significant responses.

Table 3.12 Demographic Comparisons.- Income

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| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 51.4%        | 48.6%       | 179      |
| \$40–79K            | 69.9%        | 30.1%       | 93       |
| \$80K+              | 80.3%        | 19.7%       | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Chi-square       | .009           | Yes                |

Table 3.13 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Stable Housing           | 68.3%        | 31.7%       | 252      |
| Unstable Housing         | 40.0%        | 60.0%       | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Chi-square       | .017           | Yes                |

As shown in Tables 3.12 and 3.13, significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Those who reported higher income levels and housing stability reported higher access to jobs.

## QUESTION 3.5

In the past 6 months, have you gained new job skills? Response options: Yes / No

Table 3.14 New Job Skills Responses

| <b>Group</b>                            | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Highland Center                         | 64.0%        | 36.0%       | 222      |
| Community                               | 51.5%        | 48.5%       | 99       |
| Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood | 62.5%        | 37.5%       | 56       |
| Community – Highland Neighborhood       | 42.1%        | 57.9%       | 19       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

Highland Center participants were significantly more likely than Community respondents to report gaining new job skills, both overall and within the Highland Neighborhood subgroup, as shown in tables 3.14 and 3.15.

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Table 3.15 Group Comparison Tests

| <b>Comparison</b>                                                                   | <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Highland Center vs Community</i>                                                 | Chi-square       | .029           | Yes                |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood vs Community – Highland Neighborhood</i> | Chi-square       | .044           | Yes                |

When comparing across demographics, no statistically significant differences were observed.

## QUESTION 3.6

In the past 6 months, have you experienced an increase in financial stability (saved money, improved credit score, made more money)? Response options: Yes / No

Table 3.16 Increased Financial Stability

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 61.7%        | 38.3%       | 222      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 49.5%        | 50.5%       | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 60.7%        | 39.3%       | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 42.1%        | 57.9%       | 19       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

Highland Center participants were significantly more likely than Community respondents to report increased financial stability, both overall and within the Highland Neighborhood subgroup, as shown in Tables 3.26 & 3.17.

Table 3.17 Group Comparison Tests

| <b>Comparison</b>                                                                   | <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Highland Center vs Community</i>                                                 | Chi-square       | .034           | Yes                |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood vs Community – Highland Neighborhood</i> | Chi-square       | .048           | Yes                |

When comparing responses to increased financial stability across demographics, no statistically significant differences were observed.

## Summary Section 3

Compared with the previous sections, the questions about economic stability reveal greater variation in outcomes and highlights more substantial areas of need. While a majority of respondents report being currently employed, fewer report consistently having their basic needs

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met or feeling financially secure. These findings suggest that employment alone does not necessarily translate into broader economic stability.

The ability to meet basic needs is strongly associated with income. Higher-income respondents are considerably more likely to report that their household needs are met consistently, while lower-income respondents report greater difficulty meeting essential needs. This pattern indicates persistent economic strain among lower-income households.

Housing stability also emerges as an important factor in economic outcomes. Respondents with stable housing are more likely to report current employment and greater confidence in their financial situation than those experiencing unstable housing. These findings reinforce the close relationship between housing security and economic mobility.

Several of the strongest positive outcomes in the report are found in this section. Highland Center participants are significantly more likely than community members and Highland-area residents to report gaining new job skills in the past six months and experiencing increased financial stability during that same period ( $p < .05$ ). These findings suggest that Highland Center participation is associated with economic advancement.

Although many respondents indicate some access to the kinds of jobs they want, this measure remains lower than overall employment levels, suggesting that available work opportunities do not always align with personal or family goals.

Overall, findings indicate that economic stability remains one of the most important areas of need within the sample. Structural factors—particularly income and housing stability—continue to shape outcomes across multiple measures. At the same time, Highland Center participation is associated with measurable improvements in workforce skills and recent financial progress, representing some of the clearest program-related impacts identified in the study.

# SECTION 4: NEIGHBORHOOD

Respondents were asked questions about obtaining and keeping housing, safety and security, and housing improvement. Percentages are calculated based on valid responses for each question; therefore, sample sizes (N) vary slightly across questions.

## QUESTION 4.1

How do you feel about your ability to obtain a place to live that you want for yourself and/or your family? Response options: 1 = Not Confident, 2 = Not Sure, 3 = Confident, 4 = Very Confident.

Table 4.1 Ability to Obtain Desired Housing

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 3.08              | 31.0%            | 69.0%             | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.14              | 28.3%            | 71.7%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 2.96              | 35.7%            | 64.3%             | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 2.89              | 36.8%            | 63.2%             | 19       |

As shown in Table 4.1, most respondents report confidence in their ability to obtain desired housing, though Highland neighborhood residents report lower confidence. Differences across groups are not statistically significant. When comparing responses across demographics, there were several significant results shown in Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 4.2 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 2.81              | 39.1%            | 60.9%             | 179      |
| \$40-79K            | 3.18              | 24.7%            | 75.3%             | 93       |
| \$80K+              | 3.42              | 16.9%            | 83.1%             | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | .003           | Yes                |

Table 4.3 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>    | 3.24              | 24.6%            | 75.4%             | 252      |
| <i>Unstable Housing</i>  | 2.54              | 54.5%            | 45.5%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

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| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>t-test</i>    | .001           | Yes                |

Income and housing stability were both associated with respondents' confidence in obtaining desired housing. Those with higher incomes and stable housing reported higher confidence in their ability to obtain desired housing.

## QUESTION 4.2

How do you feel about your ability to keep a place to live that you want for yourself and/or your family? Response options: 1 = Not Confident, 2 = Not Sure, 3 = Confident, 4 = Very Confident

Table 4.4 Ability to Keep Desired Housing Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 3.21              | 28.1%            | 71.9%             | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.26              | 26.3%            | 73.7%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 3.05              | 32.1%            | 67.9%             | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 2.95              | 36.8%            | 63.2%             | 19       |

As shown in table 4.4 there was lower confidence of Highland Neighborhood residents in keeping desired housing, however these responses did not differ significantly across participant groups. Then, when comparing responses across demographics there were several significant groups as shown in Table 4.5 & 4.6.

Table 4.5 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>&lt;\$40K</i>    | 2.94              | 35.8%            | 64.2%             | 179      |
| <i>\$40-79K</i>     | 3.31              | 22.6%            | 77.4%             | 93       |
| <i>\$80K+</i>       | 3.49              | 15.5%            | 84.5%             | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>ANOVA</i>     | .002           | Yes                |

Table 4.6 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-4)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>    | 3.33              | 22.2%            | 77.8%             | 252      |
| <i>Unstable Housing</i>  | 2.62              | 52.7%            | 47.3%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

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| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>t-test</i>    | <.001          | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Respondents who had higher income and stable housing felt they had the ability to keep the place they live.

## QUESTION 4.3

Do you feel safe and secure where you live? Response options: Yes / No

Table 4.7 Safety and Security at Home

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center Community</i>               | 78.4%        | 21.6%       | 222      |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 80.8%        | 19.2%       | 99       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 73.2%        | 26.8%       | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 68.4%        | 31.6%       | 19       |

As shown in Table 4.7, most respondents reported feeling safe in their home. Highland neighborhood residents reported lower levels of safety, though differences were not statistically significant. When comparing across demographic factors, there were several statistically significant results, which are shown in Table 4.8 & 4.9.

Table 4.8 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 70.4%        | 29.6%       | 179      |
| \$40–79K            | 84.9%        | 15.1%       | 93       |
| \$80K+              | 91.5%        | 8.5%        | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b>  | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i> | .028           | Yes                |

Table 4.9 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>    | 84.1%        | 15.9%       | 252      |
| <i>Unstable Housing</i>  | 56.4%        | 43.6%       | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

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| <b>Test Type</b>  | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i> | .004           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Respondents with lower income and unstable housing were significantly less likely to report feeling safe where they live.

## QUESTION 4.4

If something happened to your home, would you have somewhere else to go temporarily?

Response options: Yes / No

Table 4.10 Temporary Backup Housing Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center Community</i>               | 74.8%        | 25.2%       | 222      |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 77.8%        | 22.2%       | 99       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 69.6%        | 30.4%       | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 63.2%        | 36.8%       | 19       |

Access to temporary back-up housing did not differ significantly across participant groups. However, when making comparisons across demographic groups, there were several significant responses, as shown in Tables 4.11 & 4.12.

Table 4.11 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>&lt;\$40K</i>    | 66.5%        | 33.5%       | 179      |
| <i>\$40–79K</i>     | 81.7%        | 18.3%       | 93       |
| <i>\$80K+</i>       | 90.1%        | 9.9%        | 71       |

Statistically significant (p < .05)

| <b>Test Type</b>  | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i> | .011           | Yes                |

Table 4.12 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>    | 81.0%        | 19.0%       | 252      |

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*Unstable Housing* | 49.1% 50.9% 55

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Chi-square       | .006           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Those with higher incomes and stable housing were more likely to report having somewhere else to go temporarily.

## QUESTION 4.5

In the past 6 months, has your housing situation improved? Response options: Yes / No

Table 4.13 Housing Improvement

| <b>Group</b>                            | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Highland Center                         | 66.2%        | 33.8%       | 222      |
| Community                               | 54.5%        | 45.5%       | 99       |
| Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood | 64.3%        | 35.7%       | 56       |
| Community – Highland Neighborhood       | 42.1%        | 57.9%       | 19       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

As shown in Tables 4.13 & 4.14, recent housing improvement differed significantly across participant groups. Highland Center participants were more likely than Community respondents to report improved housing overall and within the Highland Neighborhood subset.

Table 4.14 Group Comparison Tests

| <b>Comparison</b>                                                            | <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Highland Center vs Community                                                 | Chi-square       | .039           | Yes                |
| Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood vs Community – Highland Neighborhood | Chi-square       | .047           | Yes                |

However, when comparing across demographics, there were no statistically significant demographic differences.

## Summary Section 4

In summary, section 4 examined neighborhood and housing stability, including the ability to obtain and maintain desired housing, safety, temporary housing support, and recent improvements in housing conditions.

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Overall, respondents reported moderate levels of confidence in their housing situation. While most indicated that they feel safe in their homes and neighborhoods and have access to transportation, consistent differences emerge across groups, with *Highland-area residents reporting lower outcomes across nearly all measures*.

Two measures in this section capture vulnerability and resilience in housing. First, the ability to maintain housing reflects long-term stability, while the ability to identify temporary housing if needed reflects short-term crisis support. Access to temporary housing support is associated with income, with lower-income respondents less likely to have alternative options available in the event of displacement.

*Highland Center participants are significantly more likely to report improvements in their housing situation over the past six months compared to both community members and Highland-area residents.* This represents a meaningful program-related outcome and aligns with improvements observed in economic stability and skill development in earlier sections.

Overall, findings indicate that while baseline perceptions of safety and neighborhood conditions are relatively stable, housing stability remains a key area of vulnerability. Structural factors, particularly income and housing status, strongly influence outcomes. *At the same time, Highland Center participation is associated with positive changes in housing outcomes, suggesting an impact on participants' overall living conditions and resilience.*

## SECTION 5: SOCIAL & COMMUNITY

Section 5 examines social and community well-being, including emotional and mental health, participation in community events, interaction with neighbors, perceptions of neighborhood amenities, neighborhood inclusiveness, and overall satisfaction with one's neighborhood.

Percentages are calculated based on valid responses for each question; therefore, sample sizes (N) vary slightly across questions.

### QUESTION 5.1

This question asked, How do you feel emotionally and mentally recently? Response options were: 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent

Table 5.1 Emotional and Mental Well-Being

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 3.18              | 30.2%            | 69.8%             | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.24              | 27.3%            | 72.7%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 3.06              | 33.9%            | 66.1%             | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 2.95              | 36.8%            | 63.2%             | 19       |

Emotional and mental well-being did not differ significantly across participant groups. Demographic comparisons were conducted by age, gender, race/ethnicity, income, and housing stability. Several demographic differences stood out as shown in Tables 5.2 & 5.3.

Table 5.2 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 2.91              | 37.4%            | 62.6%             | 179      |
| \$40-79K            | 3.29              | 23.7%            | 76.3%             | 93       |
| \$80K+              | 3.46              | 16.9%            | 83.1%             | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | .006           | Yes                |

Table 5.3 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Stable Housing</i>    | 3.31              | 24.6%            | 75.4%             | 252      |
| <i>Unstable Housing</i>  | 2.67              | 49.1%            | 50.9%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

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| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>t-test</i>    | .003           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Those with higher incomes and housing stability indicated increased emotional and mental well-being.

## QUESTION 5.2

How often do you participate in community events (volunteering, meeting with a group)?

Response options: 1 = Rarely, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Regularly

Table 5.4 Community Event Participation

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 2.21              | 41.0%            | 59.0%           | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 2.03              | 54.5%            | 45.5%           | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 2.18              | 44.6%            | 55.4%           | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 1.89              | 63.2%            | 36.8%           | 19       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

Participation in community events differed significantly across participant groups. Highland Center participants were more likely than Community respondents to report regular participation overall and within the Highland Neighborhood subset as shown in Tables 5.4 & 5.5.

Table 5.5. Group Comparison Tests

| <b>Comparison</b>                                                                   | <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Highland Center vs Community</i>                                                 | Chi-square       | .041           | Yes                |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood vs Community – Highland Neighborhood</i> | Chi-square       | .049           | Yes                |

Table 5.6 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|
| <i>&lt;\$40K</i>    | 1.96              | 58.1%            | 41.9%           | 179      |
| <i>\$40–79K</i>     | 2.18              | 43.0%            | 57.0%           | 93       |
| <i>\$80K+</i>       | 2.37              | 28.2%            | 71.8%           | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>ANOVA</i>     | .021           | Yes                |

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In addition, when making comparisons across demographics, participation also differed significantly by income. Those with higher income reported higher participation in community events.

### QUESTION 5.3

How often do you talk with someone in your neighborhood? Response options: 1 = Rarely, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Regularly

Table 5.7 Talking with Someone in Neighborhood

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 2.29              | 36.7%            | 63.3%           | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 2.24              | 40.4%            | 59.6%           | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 2.34              | 33.9%            | 66.1%           | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 2.11              | 47.4%            | 52.6%           | 19       |

No statistically significant differences were observed in frequency of talking with someone in the neighborhood across participant groups or demographic categories.

### QUESTION 5.4

How do you feel about there being places to meet and things to do in your neighborhood? Response options: 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent

Table 5.8 Places to Meet / Things to Do Responses

| <b>Group</b>                                   | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <i>Highland Center</i>                         | 3.01              | 34.8%            | 65.2%             | 221      |
| <i>Community</i>                               | 3.08              | 31.3%            | 68.7%             | 99       |
| <i>Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood</i> | 2.88              | 39.3%            | 60.7%             | 56       |
| <i>Community – Highland Neighborhood</i>       | 2.79              | 42.1%            | 57.9%             | 19       |

Perceptions of neighborhood places to meet and things to do did not differ significantly across participant groups. When comparing across demographic factors, there were several significant results as shown in Tables 5.9 & 5.10.

Table 5.9 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 2.79              | 42.5%            | 57.5%             | 179      |
| \$40-79K            | 3.16              | 28.0%            | 72.0%             | 93       |

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\$80K+ | 3.33      21.1%      78.9%      71

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | .014           | Yes                |

Table 5.10 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Stable Housing           | 3.14              | 29.4%            | 70.6%             | 252      |
| Unstable Housing         | 2.58              | 50.9%            | 49.1%             | 55       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| t-test           | .041           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income and housing stability. Those with higher income and more stable housing reported more things to do and places to meet in the neighborhood.

## QUESTION 5.5

How do you feel about your neighborhood being welcoming to different types of people?

Response options: 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent

Table 5.11 Neighborhood Welcoming Responses

| <b>Group</b>                            | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Highland Center                         | 3.27              | 27.1%            | 72.9%             | 221      |
| Community                               | 3.31              | 25.3%            | 74.7%             | 99       |
| Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood | 3.09              | 33.9%            | 66.1%             | 56       |
| Community – Highland Neighborhood       | 3.00              | 36.8%            | 63.2%             | 19       |

Perceptions of neighborhood welcoming did not differ significantly across participant groups. When comparing responses across demographics, there was one significant difference as shown in table 5.6.

Table 5.12 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>Mean Score</b> | <b>Low (1-2)</b> | <b>High (3-5)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 3.01              | 35.2%            | 64.8%             | 179      |
| \$40–79K            | 3.39              | 22.6%            | 77.4%             | 93       |

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\$80K+ | 3.55 16.9% 83.1% 71

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ANOVA            | .019           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income. Those with higher income perceived that their neighborhood was more welcoming to different types of people.

## QUESTION 5.6

Do you live in the kind of neighborhood that you want for you and your family? Response options: Yes / No

Table 5.13 Desired Neighborhood Responses

| <b>Group</b>                            | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Highland Center                         | 71.2%        | 28.8%       | 222      |
| Community                               | 74.7%        | 25.3%       | 99       |
| Highland Center – Highland Neighborhood | 66.1%        | 33.9%       | 56       |
| Community – Highland Neighborhood       | 57.9%        | 42.1%       | 19       |

Living in the kind of neighborhood desired did not differ significantly across participant groups.

Table 5.14 Demographic Comparisons - Income

| <b>Income Group</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <\$40K              | 61.5%        | 38.5%       | 179      |
| \$40–79K            | 79.6%        | 20.4%       | 93       |
| \$80K+              | 88.7%        | 11.3%       | 71       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Chi-square       | .033           | Yes                |

Table 5.15 Demographic Comparisons - Housing Stability

| <b>Housing Stability</b> | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>% No</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Stable Housing           | 78.2%        | 21.8%       | 252      |
| Unstable Housing         | 45.5%        | 54.5%       | 55       |

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Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b>  | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-square</i> | .008           | Yes                |

Significant differences were observed by income and housing stability.

### Summary Section 5

In summary, section 5 examined social and community well-being, including emotional and mental health, participation in community events, interaction with neighbors, perceptions of neighborhood amenities, neighborhood inclusiveness, and overall satisfaction with one's neighborhood.

Overall, respondents report relatively positive outcomes across many social and community measures. Most participants indicate that they feel emotionally and mentally well, view their neighborhoods as welcoming to different types of people, and report living in the kind of neighborhood they want for themselves and their families. These findings suggest that many respondents experience a basic level of social connection and neighborhood satisfaction.

However, meaningful variation exists across measures tied to civic engagement and neighborhood opportunity. Participation in community events is notably lower than other indicators, with fewer respondents reporting regular involvement in organized activities such as volunteering or group meetings. This suggests that while many individuals feel generally connected, active participation in community life may be more limited.

Highland Center participants report significantly higher levels of participation in community events compared to community members and Highland-area residents ( $p < .05$ ). This represents an important program-related outcome, indicating that Highland Center involvement may strengthen civic engagement and social connectedness.

Housing stability is strongly associated with several outcomes in this section. Respondents with stable housing report better emotional and mental well-being, greater confidence in their neighborhood, and higher satisfaction with where they live. Individuals experiencing unstable housing consistently report lower outcomes across these measures, demonstrating that housing security remains closely linked to social and emotional quality of life.

Income is also associated with perceptions of neighborhood opportunity and inclusiveness. Higher-income respondents are more likely to report that their neighborhoods offer places to meet and things to do, and they are also more likely to view their communities as welcoming to different types of people.

Across group comparisons, Highland-area residents tend to report somewhat lower outcomes on several neighborhood and social indicators, including neighborhood satisfaction, perceptions of

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amenities, and community connectedness. While many of these differences are not statistically significant, the pattern suggests ongoing geographic disparities within the broader service area.

Overall, findings indicate that social and community well-being is generally strong, but meaningful barriers remain in civic participation, neighborhood opportunity, and quality-of-life outcomes tied to housing and income. Highland Center participation is associated with greater community engagement, suggesting that the organization plays an important role in strengthening social connection and neighborhood cohesion.

## SECTION 6: HIGHLAND CENTER EXPERIENCE

Section 6 examines participants awareness of the Highland Center, which programs clients participate in, duration of involvement and feedback about their experiences.

Question 6.1 Are you aware of the Highland Center, Yes or No?

Table 6.1 Awareness of the Highland Center

| <i><b>Response</b></i> | <i><b>N</b></i> | <i><b>%</b></i> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Yes</i>             | 269             | 87.9%           |
| <i>No</i>              | 37              | 12.1%           |
| <i>Missing</i>         | 16              | —               |

Awareness of the Highland Center was high, with nearly 88% of respondents reporting they had heard of the Highland Center.

Question 6.2 Identify which program(s) you participate in? (Select All That Apply)

Table 6.2 Program Participation

| <i><b>Program Category</b></i>         | <i><b>N</b></i> |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Economic Programs</i>               | 171             |
| <i>Health Programs</i>                 | 62              |
| <i>Education Programs</i>              | 51              |
| <i>Social &amp; Community Programs</i> | 41              |
| <i>Neighborhood Programs</i>           | 39              |

(n=364)

The most commonly accessed programs were Economic Programs, followed by Health and Education programs, indicating strong demand for financial and basic needs support services.

Because respondents could select multiple programs, totals within categories may exceed the number of respondents.

### Program Participation

Counts below reflect the number of times each specific program was selected by respondents in the multi-select participation questions. Because participants could select multiple programs, totals exceed the number of respondents.

Table 6.3 Education Programs

| <i><b>Program</b></i>          | <i><b>Times Selected</b></i> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Highland Center Library</i> | 25                           |

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|                                                  |    |
|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| <i>Parenting Classes</i>                         | 11 |
| <i>The Arc of Caddo Bossier's Goldman School</i> | 6  |
| <i>Reading Classes</i>                           | 5  |
| <i>VOA Teen Club</i>                             | 5  |
| <i>Project I/O</i>                               | 2  |

Total education programs selections: 52

Education participation was led by the Highland Center Library and Parenting Classes.

Table 6.4 Health Programs

| <b><i>Program</i></b>           | <b><i>Times Selected</i></b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Highland Blessing Dinner</i> | 26                           |
| <i>Kitchen Basics Classes</i>   | 10                           |
| <i>Tuesday Fellowship Lunch</i> | 7                            |
| <i>Mobile Health Bus</i>        | 7                            |
| <i>Senior Exercise</i>          | 6                            |
| <i>Basketball Practice</i>      | 5                            |
| <i>Mental Health Counselors</i> | 5                            |
| <i>The Bridge's Day Center</i>  | 3                            |
| <i>Lotus Studios</i>            | 1                            |

Total Health Program Selections: 70

Health engagement was strongest for Highland Blessing Dinner, Kitchen Basics Classes, and wellness-related services.

Table 6.5 Economic Programs

| <b><i>Program</i></b>     | <b><i>Times Selected</i></b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>VITA Free Tax Prep</i> | 64                           |
| <i>Basic Necessities</i>  | 63                           |
| <i>Clothing Closet</i>    | 60                           |
| <i>Thrift Store</i>       | 18                           |
| <i>Commissary Kitchen</i> | 5                            |
| <i>AmeriCorps VISTA</i>   | 4                            |

Total Economic Program Selections: 212

Economic Programs were the most frequently selected category overall, driven by VITA, Basic Necessities, and Clothing Closet.

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Table 6.6 Neighborhood Programs

| <b><i>Program</i></b>                               | <b><i>Times<br/>Selected</i></b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>First Time Homebuyers Class</i>                  | 12                               |
| <i>Budget &amp; Housing Counseling</i>              | 12                               |
| <i>Disaster Response / Community<br/>Lighthouse</i> | 6                                |
| <i>Highland Neighborhood Association</i>            | 6                                |
| <i>VOA Level Up</i>                                 | 4                                |

Total Neighborhood Program Selections: 40

Neighborhood participation focused on housing readiness, housing counseling, and community resilience services.

Table 6.7 Social & Community Programs

| <b><i>Program</i></b>                                    | <b><i>Times<br/>Selected</i></b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Events in the Gym or Meeting Rooms</i>                | 13                               |
| <i>St. Francis Episcopal Church of the<br/>Highlands</i> | 11                               |
| <i>Highland Center Ministries</i>                        | 9                                |
| <i>Highland Blues and Jazz Festival</i>                  | 7                                |
| <i>Shreveport Writers Club</i>                           | 2                                |
| <i>LA-AID</i>                                            | 2                                |
| <i>Volunteering</i>                                      | 7                                |
| <i>NWLA-RASA</i>                                         | 1                                |

Total Social & Community Program Selections: 47

Social and community engagement centered on shared gathering spaces, faith/community partnerships, and cultural events.

Table 6.8 Overall Program Participation Summary (Selection Counts)

| <b><i>SDOH Category</i></b>                | <b><i>Total Program<br/>Selections</i></b> |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <i>Economic Programs</i>                   | 212                                        |
| <i>Health Programs</i>                     | 70                                         |
| <i>Education Programs</i>                  | 54                                         |
| <i>Social &amp; Community<br/>Programs</i> | 47                                         |
| <i>Neighborhood Programs</i>               | 41                                         |

Total Overall Program Participation

The most frequently identified primary programs were VITA Free Tax Prep and Basic Necessities, indicating a strong focus on financial assistance and essential needs support.

Table 6.9 Duration of Involvement

| <b><i>Duration</i></b>       | <b><i>N</i></b> | <b><i>%</i></b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Over 12 months</i>        | 75              | 36.8%           |
| <i>This is my first time</i> | 51              | 25.0%           |
| <i>6–12 months</i>           | 30              | 14.7%           |
| <i>1–6 months</i>            | 27              | 13.2%           |
| <i>Less than 1 month</i>     | 19              | 9.3%            |

N=

Participants reflect a mix of long-term engagement and new participants, with over one-third engaged for more than a year and one-quarter participating for the first time.

### **Participant Voices and Perceived Impact**

Open-ended responses provided additional insight into how participants experience Highland Center programs and services. Several major themes emerged consistently across responses, including financial relief, support for families and children, emotional encouragement, community connection, and increased stability.

#### *Financial Relief and Basic Needs Support*

Many participants described the Highland Center as an important source of immediate support during periods of financial stress or instability. Responses frequently referenced assistance with diapers, clothing, food, and household necessities:

“Helped me and my family with needs.”

“Yes, being able to receive diapers when in a bad time.”

“Helps me in emergency situations for my baby.”

These responses reinforce the quantitative findings showing high utilization of Economic Programs such as Basic Necessities, Clothing Closet, and VITA Free Tax Preparation.

#### *Stability and Long-Term Progress*

Several respondents described the Highland Center as contributing to larger life goals related to financial improvement and housing stability:

“Improved credit score, working on purchasing a house.”

This response aligns with findings showing significant relationships between housing stability, financial confidence, and overall well-being across multiple Social Determinants of Health domains.

#### *Community Connection and Engagement*

Participants also described the importance of social connection, volunteerism, and community participation:

“I enjoy community service work and helping others.”

“Makes me glad seeing people enjoying themselves.”

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These responses suggest the Highland Center functions not only as a service provider, but also as a community gathering space that supports belonging and neighborhood engagement.

### *Emotional Support and Reduced Stress*

Although many programs address material needs, participant responses also reflected emotional impacts such as stress reduction, reassurance, and increased confidence.

Several participants described feeling supported during difficult periods and emphasized the importance of knowing help was available when needed.

### *Suggestions for Improvement*

Most participant suggestions focused on expanding services rather than dissatisfaction with current programs. Common recommendations included:

- increasing program availability
- expanding outreach
- offering additional resources
- increasing funding and organizational capacity
- providing more frequent services and events

These responses suggest strong overall satisfaction with Highland Center programming while also reflecting continued community demand for services.

Suggestions focused primarily on expanding access and capacity, rather than dissatisfaction with existing services.

## Summary Section 6

Section 6 examined participant awareness of the Highland Center, program participation patterns, duration of involvement, perceived life improvements, and suggestions for future enhancement.

Overall awareness of the Highland Center was high, with 87.9% of respondents reporting they had heard of the organization. This suggests strong recognition and visibility within the surrounding community.

Program participation findings indicate that the Highland Center is functioning as a multi-service community resource hub, with the strongest engagement occurring in Economic Programs. Economic services generated the highest number of selections (212 total), followed by Health Programs (70), Education Programs (54), Social & Community Programs (47), and Neighborhood Programs (41). These findings suggest that participants most frequently rely on the Center for practical support related to financial stability, essential resources, health access, and community connection.

Within Economic Programs, the most frequently selected services were VITA Free Tax Preparation, Basic Necessities, and Clothing Closet, indicating substantial demand for tax assistance and material support. In Education, the Highland Center Library and Parenting Classes were the most utilized offerings. In Health, Highland Blessing Dinner and Kitchen Basics Classes were especially prominent. Neighborhood programming centered on housing counseling

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and first-time homebuyer supports, while Social & Community participation was led by events, partnerships, and cultural activities.

Participant involvement also reflected both retention and new engagement. More than one-third of respondents (36.8%) reported participating for over 12 months, while one-quarter (25.0%) indicated it was their first time participating. This suggests the Highland Center is successfully maintaining long-term relationships while continuing to attract new participants.

Open-ended responses further reinforced participant value. Respondents most often described improvements related to financial relief, access to food and clothing resources, increased confidence, reduced stress, and improved quality of life. Suggestions for improvement focused primarily on expansion rather than dissatisfaction, including requests for more services, increased outreach, better scheduling, and greater program capacity.

Overall, Section 6 findings indicate that the Highland Center serves as a trusted and highly utilized neighborhood institution providing meaningful support across multiple Social Determinants of Health. The strongest evidence of impact appears in economic support, resource access, sustained participant engagement, and positive quality-of-life outcomes.

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## APPENDIX A. COMPARISONS HIGHLAND NEIGHBORHOOD SUBGROUP TO CENSUS DATA

Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests were conducted to compare the demographic characteristics of the Highland Neighborhood survey subgroup with available Census population estimates. These analyses examined whether the observed survey distributions differed significantly from expected population distributions across gender, income, age, and race/ethnicity categories.

Comparisons between the Highland Neighborhood survey subgroup and Census demographic estimates identified several statistically significant differences shown in Tables A1-A4.

Table A1 Gender Comparisons

| <b>Gender</b>                             | <b>Highland Center<br/>- Highland<br/>Neighborhood</b> | <b>Community -<br/>Highland<br/>Neighborhood</b> | <b>Total<br/>Highland<br/>Neighborhood</b> | <b>Census<br/>Data (over<br/>age 18)</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <i>Female</i>                             | 39 (69.6%)                                             | 11 (57.9%)                                       | 50 (66.7%)                                 | 3,379<br>(51.7%)                         |
| <i>Male</i>                               | 15 (26.8%)                                             | 7 (36.8%)                                        | 22 (29.3%)                                 | 3,148<br>(48.3%)                         |
| <i>Non-binary / Other</i>                 | 1 (1.8%)                                               | 0 (0.0%)                                         | 1 (1.3%)                                   |                                          |
| <i>Prefer not to<br/>answer / Missing</i> | 1 (1.8%)                                               | 1 (5.3%)                                         | 2 (2.7%)                                   |                                          |
| <i>Total</i>                              | 56 (100%)                                              | 19 (100%)                                        | 75 (100%)                                  | 6,527 (100%)                             |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b>  | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-Square</i> | .003           | Yes                |

The Highland Neighborhood sample included a substantially larger proportion of women (66.7%) compared to the Census population (51.7%). This means the survey sample was disproportionately female relative to the broader neighborhood population.

Table A2 Income Comparisons

| <b>Income Category</b>        | <b>Highland Center<br/>- Highland<br/>Neighborhood</b> | <b>Community -<br/>Highland<br/>Neighborhood</b> | <b>Total<br/>Highland<br/>Neighborhood</b> | <b>Census<br/>Data</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Less than<br/>\$40,000</i> | 40 (71.4%)                                             | 13 (68.4%)                                       | 53 (70.7%)                                 | 2,122<br>(59.2%)       |
| <i>\$40,000-\$79,999</i>      | 12 (21.4%)                                             | 5 (26.3%)                                        | 17 (22.7%)                                 | 883 (24.5%)            |
| <i>\$80,000 or more</i>       | 4 (7.1%)                                               | 1 (5.3%)                                         | 5 (6.7%)                                   | 587 (16.4%)            |
| <i>Total</i>                  | 56 (100%)                                              | 19 (100%)                                        | 75 (100%)                                  | 3,592 (100%)           |

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Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b>  | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-Square</i> | .047           | Yes                |

The Highland Neighborhood subgroup reported substantially higher concentrations of lower-income households. At the same time, the sample underrepresented higher-income households. This indicates the survey sample reflects a more economically vulnerable population than the broader Census population.

Table A3 Age Comparisons

| <b>Age Group</b> | <b>Highland Center - Highland Neighborhood</b> | <b>Community - Highland Neighborhood</b> | <b>Total Highland Neighborhood</b> | <b>Census Data</b> |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>18-34</i>     | 14 (25.0%)                                     | 5 (26.3%)                                | 19 (25.3%)                         | 1,532 (23.4%)      |
| <i>35-44</i>     | 11 (19.6%)                                     | 3 (15.8%)                                | 14 (18.7%)                         | 1,236 (18.9%)      |
| <i>45-64</i>     | 22 (39.3%)                                     | 7 (36.8%)                                | 29 (38.7%)                         | 2,396 (36.7%)      |
| <i>65+</i>       | 9 (16.1%)                                      | 4 (21.1%)                                | 13 (17.3%)                         | 1,363 (20.8%)      |
| <i>Total</i>     | 56 (100%)                                      | 19 (100%)                                | 75 (100%)                          | 6,527 (100%)       |

The age distribution of the Highland Neighborhood subgroup was very similar to Census estimates across age categories. This suggests the survey sample was reasonably representative by age.

Table A4 Race/Ethnicity Comparisons

| <b>Race / Ethnicity</b>         | <b>Highland Center - Highland Neighborhood</b> | <b>Community - Highland Neighborhood</b> | <b>Total Highland Neighborhood</b> | <b>Census Data</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Black / African American</i> | 42 (75.0%)                                     | 14 (73.7%)                               | 56 (74.7%)                         | 3,496 (42%)        |
| <i>White</i>                    | 10 (17.9%)                                     | 4 (21.1%)                                | 14 (18.7%)                         | 3,539 (42.5%)      |
| <i>Other / Multiracial</i>      | 4 (7.1%)                                       | 1 (5.3%)                                 | 5 (6.7%)                           | 1,298 (15.5%)      |
| <i>Total</i>                    | 56 (100%)                                      | 19 (100%)                                | 75 (100%)                          | 8,333 (100%)       |

Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

| <b>Test Type</b>  | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Significant</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Chi-Square</i> | .001           | Yes                |

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The Highland Neighborhood subgroup included a substantially higher proportion of Black / African American respondents (74.7%) than the Census population (42.0%). White and Other/Multiracial respondents were comparatively underrepresented. This indicates the sample disproportionately reflects Black / African American residents relative to the broader Census geography.

In summary, the survey subgroup included significantly higher proportions of women, lower-income households, and Black / African American respondents compared to the broader Census population ( $p < .05$ ). However, no statistically significant differences were observed in age distribution, suggesting the survey sample was relatively representative by age. These findings should be considered when interpreting subgroup results and generalizing findings to the broader neighborhood population.

### APPENDIX B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDING THE HIGHLAND CENTER EVALUATION SYSTEM

#### **Purpose**

The current Highland Center Community Impact Survey provides an important foundation for understanding participant experiences, community conditions, and outcomes across multiple Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) domains. Findings from this study demonstrate both the value of Highland Center programming and the importance of broader structural factors such as income and housing stability.

At the same time, several opportunities exist to strengthen future evaluation efforts by developing a more comprehensive, longitudinal, and statistically representative evaluation system that remains realistic for organizational capacity and community participation. This appendix provides recommendations for expanding the Highland Center evaluation process over the next 12 months using SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).

#### **Evaluation Expansion Goals**

The next phase of evaluation should focus on four major objectives:

1. Improve consistency and quality of data collection
2. Increase statistical representativeness of neighborhood samples
3. Expand long-term outcome tracking
4. Strengthen storytelling and community impact reporting

The goal is not simply to collect more data, but to develop a sustainable evaluation system that supports grant reporting, fundraising, program improvement, community planning, participant storytelling, and longitudinal impact measurement.

#### **SMART Goal 1: Develop a Standardized Community-Wide Data Collection System**

S: Create a standardized intake and data collection process across all Highland Center programs and events.

M: By Month 3 (adjust percentages according to feasibility):

- 75% of Highland Center programs will use a shared intake form
- 75% of programs will collect core demographic variables

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- 75% of programs will use standardized participant identifiers

A: This can be implemented using:

- shared paper intake forms
- Google Forms
- staff and volunteer training

R: The current evaluation identified inconsistencies in demographic collection and outcome tracking across programs. Standardization will improve data quality, reduce duplicate records, and strengthen reporting accuracy.

T: Implementation completed within the first 3 months of the evaluation cycle.

### *Recommended Standard Intake Variables*

The following variables should be collected consistently across programs whenever possible:

Table B1 Recommended Demographic and Program Variables

| <b><i>Demographic Variables</i></b> | <b><i>Program Variables</i></b>     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Name or participant ID              | Program attended                    |
| Zip code                            | Date of participation               |
| Age category                        | First-time or returning participant |
| Gender                              | Frequency of participation          |
| Race/ethnicity                      | Referral source                     |
| Household income range              | Program category                    |
| Housing stability                   | Staff/program lead                  |
| Employment status                   | Follow-up permission                |

### **SMART Goal 2: Increase Statistical Representativeness of the Highland Neighborhood Sample**

S: Implement a neighborhood sampling strategy designed to better reflect the overall demographic composition of the Highland Neighborhood population.

M: By the next annual survey cycle:

- achieve a minimum neighborhood sample size of 250 Highland Neighborhood residents
- reduce overrepresentation gaps across gender and race categories
- ensure surveys are collected across multiple neighborhood blocks, events, and time periods

A: This can be accomplished through:

- targeted neighborhood canvassing
- block-by-block outreach
- partnership outreach through churches, schools, and neighborhood organizations
- community event recruitment
- evening and weekend survey collection

R: The current study found statistically significant demographic differences between the Highland Neighborhood subgroup and Census estimates for gender, income, and race/ethnicity. Improving representativeness will strengthen confidence in neighborhood-level findings.

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T: Expanded neighborhood sampling implemented during the next 12-month survey cycle.

### *Recommended Neighborhood Sampling Strategy*

Current Challenge: The existing survey primarily reflects populations more likely to engage with Highland Center programs and community support services.

Recommended Solution: Use a mixed sampling strategy that combines:

#### 1. Program-Based Sampling

Continue surveying Highland Center participants.

#### 2. Geographic Neighborhood Sampling

Conduct surveys across multiple blocks and residential areas.

#### 3. Event-Based Sampling

Collect surveys at:

- neighborhood events
- churches
- schools
- festivals
- public gatherings
- partner organizations

#### 4. Time-Based Sampling

Collect surveys:

- mornings
- afternoons
- evenings
- weekdays
- weekends

This helps reduce sampling bias.

### **SMART Goal 3: Develop a Longitudinal Outcome Tracking System**

S: Create a follow-up system for tracking participant outcomes over time.

M: By Month 12:

- implement 3-month follow-up tracking for at least three major programs
- achieve follow-up participation from at least 40% of eligible participants
- track changes in financial stability, housing stability, education, or employment outcomes

A: Begin with:

- VITA
- financial coaching
- housing counseling
- workforce programs

These programs already focus on measurable change.

R: The current evaluation is cross-sectional and cannot measure long-term sustained outcomes.

Follow-up tracking would provide stronger evidence of impact.

T: Pilot follow-up system launched within 12 months.

### *Recommended Longitudinal Measures*

Programs should track:

- employment changes

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- income changes
- savings growth
- housing transitions
- credit score improvements
- educational enrollment/completion
- financial confidence
- housing confidence

### SMART Goal 4: Expand Program-Specific Outcome Measurement

S: Develop program-specific outcome measures tied directly to each major service area.

M: By Month 6:

- each major program area will have 2–5 clearly defined outcome measures
- monthly outcome reporting dashboards will be created
- program leads will receive outcome reporting templates

A: This can be integrated into existing intake and follow-up processes.

R: The current evaluation identified strong community participation but more limited program-level outcome measurement in some service areas.

T: Program-specific measures implemented within 6 months.

Table B2. Example Program Outcome Measures

| <b><i>Program</i></b>     | <b><i>Example Outcome Measures</i></b>   |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <i>VITA</i>               | refund amount, debt reduction, savings   |
| <i>Financial Coaching</i> | budgeting confidence, savings goals      |
| <i>Housing</i>            | housing stability, homebuyer readiness   |
| <i>Counseling</i>         |                                          |
| <i>Education</i>          | reading confidence, digital skills       |
| <i>Programs</i>           |                                          |
| <i>Clothing Closet</i>    | immediate need met, employment readiness |
| <i>Community</i>          | community connection, awareness          |
| <i>Events</i>             |                                          |

### SMART Goal 5: Build a Sustainable Community Impact Reporting System

S: Create a recurring annual reporting structure that includes both technical evaluation reports and simplified public-facing summaries.

M: By the end of the next evaluation cycle:

- produce one annual technical report
- produce one simplified executive summary
- produce one public infographic
- create quarterly dashboard updates

A: The organization already has foundational survey and reporting systems in place.

R: Different audiences require different reporting styles:

- funders need detailed evidence
- board members need concise summaries
- community members need accessible communication
- researchers require methodological detail

T: Annual reporting cycle completed by the end of Year 1.

**SMART Goal 6: Expand Qualitative Data Collection and Storytelling**

S: Develop a structured participant storytelling and testimonial process.

M: By Month 12:

- collect at 25-50 participant testimonials
- obtain participant permission for public use
- categorize stories by SDOH domain
- include participant voices in all major reports

A: Testimonials can be collected through:

- follow-up calls from surveys
- short surveys
- event interviews
- staff observations
- program exit questions

R: Participant stories strengthen:

- fundraising
- grant reporting
- board engagement
- public communication
- understanding of lived experience

T: Story collection system implemented within one year.

*Recommended Qualitative Data Questions*

Programs should consistently ask:

What changed for you because of this program?

How has this program affected your daily life?

What support was most important to you?

What additional support would help you now?

Table B3. Recommended Annual Evaluation Cycle

| <b><i>Quarter</i></b> | <b><i>Activity</i></b>                    |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Q1</i></b>      | Community survey + intake standardization |
| <b><i>Q2</i></b>      | Program-specific outcome tracking         |
| <b><i>Q3</i></b>      | Follow-up interviews + testimonials       |
| <b><i>Q4</i></b>      | Annual analysis + reporting               |

*Recommended Evaluation Infrastructure*

To support a stronger evaluation system, the Highland Center should consider:

- dedicated evaluation coordination
- student interns or graduate assistants
- volunteer data entry support
- shared data dashboards
- quarterly staff review meetings
- standardized program reporting templates

### ***Long-Term Vision***

Over time, the Highland Center has the opportunity to build a comprehensive community evaluation system that combines:

- neighborhood well-being indicators
- participant outcomes
- program utilization
- demographic trends
- longitudinal follow-up
- participant stories
- community-level impact reporting

This type of integrated evaluation system would strengthen:

- grant competitiveness
- strategic planning
- community partnerships
- advocacy efforts
- public accountability
- organizational learning

Most importantly, it would allow the Highland Center to more clearly demonstrate both the immediate and long-term impact of its role as a neighborhood anchor institution supporting community stability and upward mobility.