Resident Voice Counts

How CORES recognizes resident experience

Why does resident agency and voice matter?

When residents are satisfied with their homes and see their feedback acted on, they are more likely to trust staff and engage in services and programs. That engagement builds agency: residents help shape programs and community life. Services designed with resident input better reflect residents' priorities and are more likely to make a real difference and impact of resident outcomes.

Measuring Resident Experience – A Requirement for CORES Certified Organizations

CORES 2.0 includes a new threshold requirement: certified organizations must track and measure resident experience and/or satisfaction to demonstrate their commitment to resident-centered services and programs.

How can organizations meet this requirement?

1. Track experience in one or more of these areas:

- Resident satisfaction with property management, maintenance, and/or the building, apartment, or community
- Resident satisfaction with resident services staff and/or the services themselves
- Resident agency (power, ownership of change, sense of agency)
- Social cohesion and belonging
- Civic engagement

2. Upload to your CORES application:

Required: Template of the tool(s) that the organization uses to collect / track resident experience and/or satisfaction data.

Optional but scored: Summary / aggregated resident data showing these tool(s) are in use, if available.

At a minimum, your uploaded template must show that you measure resident satisfaction and/or experience. Uploading resident data is not required.

Why is CORES adding this requirement?

CORES 2.0 is a refresh to keep resident services resident-centered and outcomes-driven. Measuring experience and satisfaction puts resident voice and agency at the center.

Reflecting Movement in the Field: Many resident services and affordable housing providers are already tracking data to understand resident satisfaction, experience, social connection, and/or perceptions of agency.

Acting on feedback builds trust. Residents are unlikely to feel connected or engage with staff if they feel the property is unsafe, in poor condition, or unresponsive to their concerns. Residents need to see their input acted on before they invest their time.

Aligning to Resident Priorities and Needs: Measuring satisfaction and experience helps to identify priorities and needs that may inform property management, resident services, asset management and other departments.

How does this connect to other CORES documentation?

Resident Opportunities & Priorities Assessment. The Resident Opportunities & Priorities Assessment must include aggregated resident data/feedback alongside aggregated resident demographics. Resident experience can be one type of feedback that helps inform service priorities. Practitioners may include questions as part of a larger survey, or may use a separate survey/ tool to specifically focus on resident satisfaction or experience.

Resident Outcomes. Tracking the change over time or impact on resident satisfaction and/or other measures of resident experience can count as outcomes measures in one impact area.

Where should our organization start?

Look beyond program interest surveys to residents' broader experience of living at the property. Some questions your organization may ask yourselves include:

- How often do we ask residents about their satisfaction with the property, services staff, and management?
- How do we address issues residents raise, and how do we communicate action?
- Do we offer several ways to share feedback, such as a survey, suggestion box, hotline, etc.? How often do residents use these channels?
- Have we asked residents how they prefer to share feedback?

What could we measure? Examples from the field

The measures below are adapted from SAHF's Measuring Resident Agency and Voice guide (2022) and 2024 Update "Revisiting Measuring Agency & Voice". These are examples to consider adapting, not a required list of measures to collect.

Resident Satisfaction

Satisfying resident experience, quality of life and safety

- Satisfaction (5- or 10-point scale) with the apartment, common areas, outdoor spaces, services and events, maintenance, and/or staff responsiveness
- Likelihood of recommending the property as a good place to live
- Agreement that staff consistently deliver on promises
- Feeling of safety at the property, day and night
- Reputation of the community as a place to live
- What residents like best about living there, what they would change, and how things could be improved (open-ended)

Social Cohesion & Belonging

Connection amongst neighbors to support collective action, resident connections and sense of belonging

- Do you know your neighbors? Can you rely on them?
- Whether people in the community can count on each other for help
- Whether the property offers opportunities to help others
- Whether there are spaces to gather, and which work best
- How the organization could help residents feel more connected to neighbors and also staff

Resident Agency

A shift in influence toward residents to shape and lead programming is an expression of agency

- Agreement that "I can influence what happens at this property"
- Residents' vision for success of services, programs, initiatives, etc.
- Number of residents engaged in decision-making, strategy implementation, and quality improvement for data collection, services or operations
- Documented changes made as a result of resident input
- Residents' own definitions of success for a program or initiative

Civic Engagement

How residents engage in the community and at the property to exercise choice and influence change

- Volunteering in the community
- Contacting an elected official or attending a public hearing
- Voter registration and if residents are participating in elections (for those that are eligible to vote)
- Residents participating on boards or on other decision-making bodies in the community
- Residents running for public office
- Advocacy, training and community organizing opportunities
- Community issues addressed through resident advocacy