

# UNION SETTLEMENT

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## **UNION SETTLEMENT COMMUNITY SENTIMENT SURVEY REVEALS TOP GOALS AND CONCERNS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS**

*The need to improve schools again ranks as top issue of survey participants;  
Reducing crime, building affordable housing and creating new jobs are also major objectives.*

Union Settlement ([www.unionsettlement.org](http://www.unionsettlement.org)), the oldest and largest social service provider in East Harlem, today released the [results](#) of its biennial survey, which polled over 1,000 individuals who use Union Settlement's programs and services. The survey, which asked participants about issues of concern in the community, was conducted with the assistance of the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, which helped design the survey and compiled the results.

For the third consecutive survey, the need to improve local schools ranked as the top concern, with over 21% of respondents indicating that doing so was the most important issue, and 42% saying it was among their top three concerns. The other top concerns included the need to:

- Reduce crime (listed by 19.5% as the top concern and 40% as one of the top three concerns);
- Build more affordable housing (11.1% top concern/34% top three concerns); and
- Create more job opportunities (10.6 % top concern/34% top three concerns).

For the fourth survey in a row, reducing crime topped the list of goals that residents indicated were “extremely important,” even if it was not their top concern, with over 80% of respondents indicating that the issue was extremely important. This was followed by:

- Improving schools (78%);
- Building affordable housing (77%);
- Providing affordable health care (75%); and
- Creating more jobs (74%).

“These types of surveys are vital to ensuring that the voices of East Harlem residents are heard,” said David Nocenti, Union Settlement’s Executive Director. “It is crucial that elected officials and policymakers at all levels – federal, state and local – fully understand the needs and concerns of the individuals they serve, because only with that information are they able to target services and improvements to the areas of greatest need.”

“Helping to identify and address community needs is central to our role as social workers,” said Dr. Nancy Giunta, Associate Professor of the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College and Director of Silberman Aging. “Assisting with these types of surveys not only is a valuable community service, it also provides insights that our students and faculty can utilize in their daily work. These types of activities are mutually beneficial to academic and social service organizations, and they help further the goals of collaborative initiatives like ‘All in East Harlem’ recently launched by Hunter College.”

To view the survey results, please go to: <https://unionsettlement.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9CommunityAssessmentSurvey2018ReportExecutiveSummary020519FINAL.pdf>

### **2018 survey methodology**

The 2018 survey was provided to participants in nine different Union Settlement programs: Adult Education, Business Development, College Readiness, Early Childhood Education, Family Child Care Network, Meals on Wheels, Mental Health Counseling, Senior Services and Youth Services. A total of 1,130 individuals responded to the survey, ranging from parents of infants in the early childhood program, to seniors up to 100 years old.

Respondents represented a diverse mix of ethnic and racial backgrounds. A majority (54.9%) identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic, and 35.6% as African American or black. The surveyed participants reported speaking over 15 different languages, primarily English (56.6%) or Spanish (29.8%), but also French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Bambara, Wolof, Bengali and multiple others. About 60% of respondents were born in the United States, an additional 9% were from Puerto Rico and the remaining 31% were born elsewhere. Of those born outside of the United States and Puerto Rico, the most common countries of origin were the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Ecuador and China. A substantial majority (70.3%) of those surveyed were women.

With respect to program satisfaction, the 2018 survey revealed that 93% of program participants were either “always” or “usually” satisfied with Union Settlement’s services, and 91% would “definitely” or “probably” recommend Union Settlement’s programs to someone else.

“I am very pleased that satisfaction rates are so high among Union Settlement’s program participants,” said Mr. Nocenti. “This demonstrates the great work that Union Settlement’s employees do every day, and how much local residents value the services that we provide.”

“I also want to thank the Silberman School of Social Work for their tremendous assistance on the survey again this year,” said Mr. Nocenti. “Their role is vital, and we would not be able to undertake this effort without them.”

A team of professors and students from the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, led by Associate Professor Nancy Giunta and Doctoral Fellow Meredith Doherty. Master of Social Work interns Jessica Mercedes, Seoran Ok and Albert Bencosme assisted with data entry and analysis, as well as language translation and other tasks.

## **About Union Settlement**

Union Settlement is an on-the-ground resource for East Harlem residents of all ages, and a passionate advocate for the needs of underserved communities. Since opening our doors in 1895, we have brought education, wellness and community-building programs to our neighborhood, empowering New Yorkers with opportunities to better their lives. With a staff of more than 450 and services that impact 10,000 people, Union Settlement is building the vitality and success of East Harlem. For more information visit [www.unionsettlement.org](http://www.unionsettlement.org).

## **About the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College**

The Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College School, established in 1958, is the oldest publicly sponsored graduate social work program in the City of New York. The school's focus is on excellence in education for social work practice, and its graduates are known for providing leadership in addressing major social problems in our ever-changing society. Through its educational programs and all of its activities, the School of Social Work especially seeks to enhance the well-being of poor, vulnerable and stigmatized populations in our society. The faculty of the School of Social Work is nationally and internationally known for its teaching, scholarship and contributions to the field of study. They are focused on agency based social work practice, education of their students, and knowledge-building through research.

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