What is VoiceGR?
VoiceGR is an annual, broad-scale, community survey that aims to assess Greater Grand Rapids residents’ perceptions and experiences on a variety of topics. The primary goal of VoiceGR is to provide open, accessible, and objective community data to residents, nonprofits, governments, businesses, and other decision-makers. The data are shared via interactive, web-based tools and provide a benchmark to measure progress and inform decisions in the community.

A key component of the data tools is that they allow for disaggregation of results. Disaggregation refers to splitting results as a whole into their subgroups, such as splitting results by gender to see how people of different genders answered the same question. By being able to understand the diversity in perceptions of subgroups, the results can help to guide more informed decisions.

Each year, VoiceGR strives to survey a sample of residents with characteristics that match the characteristics of the Greater Grand Rapids population. The VoiceGR 2016 results are the third year of data that allow for trend analysis. This brief highlights the key findings and trends from VoiceGR 2016 and previous years of VoiceGR.

Visit www.VoiceGR.org to learn more and explore the results.

How is Greater Grand Rapids as a place to live?
For each year since VoiceGR 2014, over 80 percent of VoiceGR respondents gave Greater Grand Rapids a grade of an “A” or a “B” as a place to live. However, this rating continues to vary based on respondent demographics, including home location, race, education, and poverty level.

How are Greater Grand Rapids neighborhoods as places to live?
The top strengths and problems of neighborhoods, as identified by respondents, were similar in VoiceGR 2015 and VoiceGR 2016.

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2015
Community/people
Location
Infrastructure

2016
Cohesion
People
Location

TOP STRENGTHS

TOP PROBLEMS

2015
Crime/safety
Infrastructure
Lack of community cohesion

2016
Crime
Infrastructure
Lack of cohesion

TOP REASONS FOR FEELING UNSAFE

Crime/violence
People (references to certain types/demographics of people)
Perceived unsafe activities, such as loitering and high foot traffic

Since VoiceGR 2014, perceptions of feeling unsafe in neighborhoods have increased overall and also continues to vary by respondent demographics, including home location.
Is racism a problem in Greater Grand Rapids?
Racism is seen as a bigger problem in the U.S. than in Greater Grand Rapids. Moreover, it is seen as less of a problem in respondent neighborhoods. This trend is similar across VoiceGR 2015 and VoiceGR 2016 when including only responses that racism is “very much” a problem.

Who is not able to meet their basic needs in Greater Grand Rapids?
Each year, since 2014, between 19 percent and 24 percent of respondents have indicated they have not been able to meet their basic needs. This number also continues to vary by respondent demographics. In VoiceGR 2016, respondents indicated they had the most difficulty meeting the following basic needs: healthcare, prescriptions, and clothing.

Who is uninsured in Greater Grand Rapids?
In VoiceGR 2016, seven percent of respondents had no health insurance in the past year and an additional seven percent of respondents indicated they only had health insurance for part of the year (the past year includes both 2015 and 2016). These percentages differ by respondent demographics, including race, education, employment, and poverty level.

TOP REASONS FOR NOT HAVING HEALTH INSURANCE

- Cost
- Choice
- Employment

Visit [VoiceGR.org](http://VoiceGR.org) to learn more and explore the results.

VoiceGR is a product of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy’s Community Research Institute at Grand Valley State University.

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