



Grubb Properties 2023 State of the Young American Renter

Community, Cost, and Climate: Taking the Pulse of the Young American Renter

Even as they face economic challenges, Gen Z and millennial renters embrace community and prepare for a brighter future.

While the nation grapples with an epidemic of loneliness, young renters appreciate the importance of community and understand the role their living situation plays in their well-being. Higher rent and inflation, meanwhile, remain top of mind, while environmental issues play a key role in their rental decisions.

For the second consecutive year, Grubb Properties and Wakefield Research polled 1,000 American renters aged 22–35 in apartment communities to gauge their attitudes and perspectives on the current rental and economic environment. This year, we further refined the survey group to those living in apartment communities of 10 units or more in the 100 largest US metropolitan areas.

Of these renters, an impressive 72% value the importance of connections to their neighbors, while more than half (56%) said their current rental situation has a positive impact on their personal well-being.

How important is it for you to feel socially connected to your neighbors and other people in your apartment community?

Extremely important	18%
Very important	24%
Somewhat important	30%
Not very important	21%
Not important at all	7%

QuickFacts

VERY OR COMPLETELY IMPORTANT (NET)	42%
SOMEWHAT, VERY, OR COMPLETELY IMPORTANT (NET)	72%
NOT VERY OR AT ALL IMPORTANT (NET)	28%

Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023



To what extent does your current rental situation impact your sense of personal well-being?

It has a very positive impact on my well-being	30%
It has a somewhat positive impact on my well-being	26%
It has no impact on my well-being	22%
It has a somewhat negative impact on my well-being	17%
It has a very negative impact on my well-being	5%

QuickFacts

56% POSITIVE IMPACT (NET)

22% NEGATIVE IMPACT (NET)



Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023

± Data under “QuickFacts” were derived from the responses, not included as response options that were read during fielding. We include QuickFacts in instances where we feel they will be helpful.

And most are happy with their current rental. More than three quarters (77%) stated they were at least somewhat satisfied with their current apartment, with almost half (46%) stating they were completely, or very satisfied.

How satisfied are you with your current rental situation?

Completely satisfied	20%
Very satisfied	26%
Somewhat satisfied	31%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14%
Very dissatisfied	6%
Completely dissatisfied	4%

QuickFacts

VERY OR COMPLETELY SATISFIED (NET)	46%
SATISFIED (NET)	77%
DISSATISFIED (NET)	23%
VERY OR COMPLETELY DISSATISFIED (NET)	10%

Grubb Properties Survey Wakefield Research, September 2023

“At our Link Apartments, our intent has always been to provide accessible housing and to foster vibrant communities,” said Todd Williams, Grubb’s Chief Investment Officer. “By providing communal spaces, shared amenities, and group activities, as well as selecting desirable and connected locations, we strive to create an environment that fosters interaction with neighbors and promotes the overall well-being of our residents. The results of this survey validate our approach.”

Rising Rents, Rising Concerns

While connection remains crucial, financial worries cast a long shadow:

- More than three-quarters (78%) of young renters reported a rent hike in the past year, whereas 22% said their rent stayed the same or declined.

How much has your rent changed over the past year?

Decreased more than 50%	2%
Decreased 40% to 50%	3%
Decreased 30% to 39%	3%
Decreased 20% to 29%	3%
Decreased 10% to 19%	4%
Decreased 1% to 9%	5%
My rent has not increased or decreased	2%
Increased 1% to 9%	17%
Increased 10% to 19%	23%
Increased 20% to 29%	17%
Increased 30% to 39%	8%
Increased 40% to 50%	8%
Increased more than 50%	6%

QuickFacts

EXPERIENCED A RENT INCREASE (NET)	78%
STAY THE SAME OR EXPERIENCED A RENT DECREASE (NET)	22%

Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023

- Of those who experienced an increase, nine out of ten (90%) either plan to or have already taken action to address the higher rents.
- Almost half (44%) stated that they would be cutting back on extra purchases, while more than a third (37%) stated they would look for a new job or take on a second job.
- One in ten (10%) said they could handle the higher rent without making any changes.

Which of the following are you doing or plan to do to address that rent increase?

(Asked among those who have experienced a rent increase over the past year)

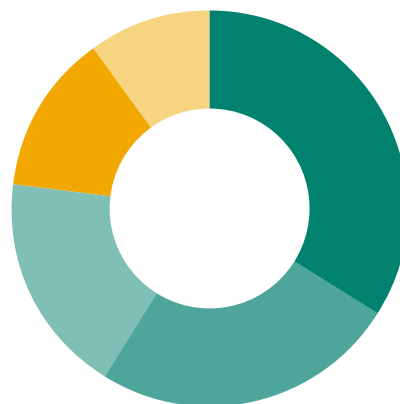
Cutting back on extra purchases, like eating out, events, etc.	44%
Looking for a new job or adding a side job	37%
Look for a new place to rent or live	33%
Taking money from savings	30%
Cutting back on leisure travel	29%
Cutting back on necessity purchases like my grocery bill	29%
Using credit cards to pay rent	18%
Getting/adding a roommate	14%
Move home with parents or family	12%
Relying on a friend or family member for rent money	12%
Selling my car	9%
Other	0%
Nothing: I am able to cover the rent increase	10%

QuickFacts



When asked to rank five economic concerns, rental increases topped the list, with 33% choosing it as their largest financial worry. Perhaps surprisingly, given the resumption of federal loan payments, student loan repayment was cited only by 10% as their primary concern.

Please rank the following in order of your biggest current financial concerns. – TOP RANKED RESPONSE



Rent increases	33%
Rising prices of goods	25%
Lack of savings	18%
Job security/risk of layoff	13%
Paying back student loans	10%

Renters are concerned about their ability to find another apartment within their budget. The majority (60%) said it would be at least somewhat hard, while 40% said it would be at least somewhat easy.

If you needed to find a new apartment today, how easy or hard would it be to find one in your price range?

Extremely easy	10%
Very easy	9%
Somewhat easy	21%
Somewhat hard	29%
Very hard	17%
Extremely hard	14%

QuickFacts

EASY (NET)	40%
HARD (NET)	60%
VERY OR EXTREMELY HARD (NET)	31%

Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023



Despite these concerns, young renters are optimistic about their financial prospects. Nearly two-thirds (65%) state their financial situation will be at least somewhat better a year from now, and four out of five (82%) intend to buy a home in the future.

Compared to today, how do you think your financial situation will change a year from now?

My financial situation will be much better	23%
My financial situation will be somewhat better	42%
My financial situation will not change	22%
My financial situation will be somewhat worse	8%
My financial situation will be much worse	4%

QuickFacts

65% WILL BE BETTER (NET)
35% WILL NOT CHANGE OR WILL BE WORSE (NET)



How many more years do you plan to rent your home before deciding to buy a home?

Less than a year	36%
1–2 years	21%
3–4 years	13%
5+ years	12%
I never plan to stop renting	18%

QuickFacts

PLANS TO BUY A HOME AT SOME POINT (NET) **82%**

Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023

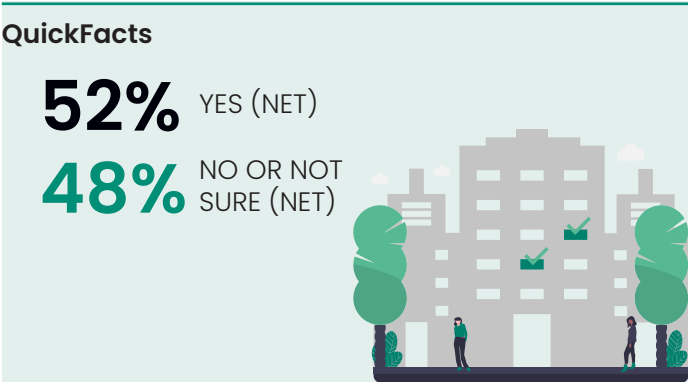
Planning for the Future — New Locations and a Greener Tomorrow

More than half of young renters (52%) say they will likely move to a new state within the next five years. When asked why, almost a third (31%) cited lower cost of living, followed by job opportunities (18%) and a more appealing climate (12%).

In the next five years, do you plan to relocate to another state?

Yes, definitely	21%
Yes, probably	31%
No, probably not	24%
No, definitely not	14%
Not sure	10%

QuickFacts



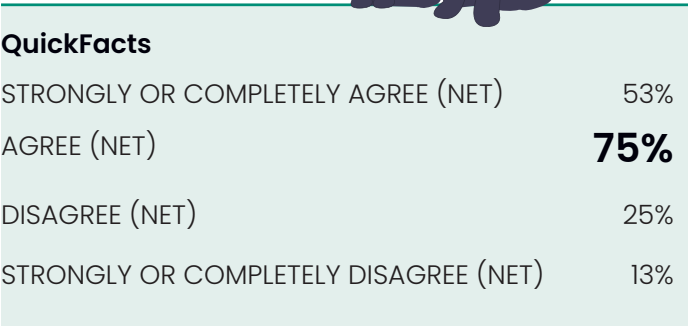
Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023

And they made it clear their pets will stay with them, whether they move or not. Of pet owners surveyed, 75% agreed they'd never consider a pet-free building.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? No matter how much rent increases, I would never consider a pet-free building.

(Asked among those who have pets)

Completely agree	34%
Strongly agree	20%
Somewhat agree	21%
Somewhat disagree	13%
Strongly disagree	6%
Completely disagree	6%

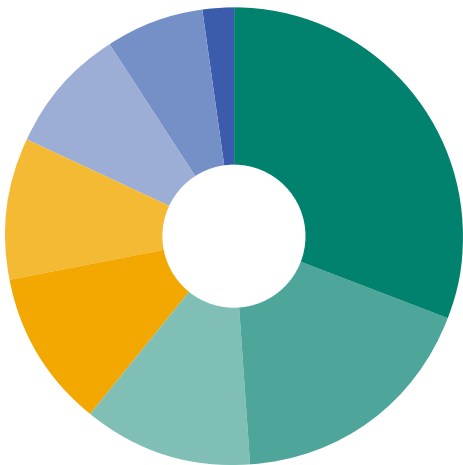


Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023

Which of the following best describes the primary reason why you plan to move to another state in the next 5 years?

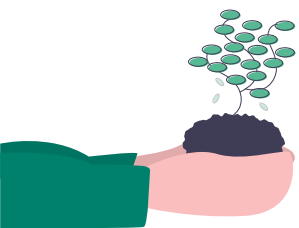
(Asked among those who plan to relocate to another state in the next five years)

Lower cost of living	31%
More attractive job opportunities	18%
More desirable climate or weather	12%
Closer to family or friends	11%
More recreational activities nearby	10%
Safety concerns	9%
Political environment more aligned to my own views	7%
Other	2%



Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023

Climate also plays a role in young renters' apartment decisions. Four out of five (81%) of young renters stated environmental factors influence their rental decisions.



How influential are energy efficient and environmentally friendly apartment complexes in your decision on where to rent?

Extremely influential/the most influential factor	12%
Very influential	29%
Somewhat influential	41%
Not very influential	13%
Not at all influential	5%

QuickFacts	
VERY OR EXTREMELY INFLUENTIAL (NET)	41%
SOMEWHAT, VERY, OR EXTREMELY INFLUENTIAL (NET)	82%
NOT VERY OR AT ALL INFLUENTIAL (NET)	18%

Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023

This attention to the environment extends to the future. When asked which features they most want to see in an apartment 10 years from now, sustainable technology — such as solar power and advanced recycling systems — took the top spot, with almost half (48%) including sustainability on their wish list.

Envisioning the future of apartment living in ten years, which of the following amenities would you most like to have in your apartment or apartment community?

Sustainability technology (solar power, advanced recycling/composting, etc.)	48%
Biometric security or facial recognition on door locks	33%
Facial recognition of visitor photos so they can enter my complex	31%
Cloud-based security for smart devices in the apartment complex	31%
Robotic cleaning or cooking assistant	28%
Reconfigurable or movable walls and furniture	25%
Self-driving car share	22%
Virtual reality integration	17%
3D printing station	16%
Other	3%

Grubb Properties Survey with Wakefield Research, September 2023

Note: respondents could select more than one answer.

“Along with our primary mission of mitigating the nation’s housing crisis, Grubb Properties is also focused on creating resiliency throughout our multifamily portfolio,” said Williams. “We’re building new communities in some of the most supply-constrained areas of the country, including Los Angeles, New York, the Bay Area, and Washington, DC. To ensure environmental resiliency, we utilize environmental screening to identify and avoid climate-related risks, and we prioritize sustainability, targeting at least a National Green Building Standard Silver certification for all new projects.”

Survey Background

The second annual Grubb Properties State of the Young American Renter Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) among 1,000 young apartment renters (defined as renters aged 22–35) living in apartment buildings with 10 or more units in the top 100 Designated Marketing Area markets, between September 1–19, 2023, using an email invitation and an online survey.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

Due to rounding, numbers presented throughout this document may not add up precisely to totals provided and percentages may not precisely reflect the absolute figures.

About Grubb Properties

Grubb Properties, founded in 1963, is a vertically integrated real estate company focused on the Essential Housing space through its Link ApartmentsSM brand. The company targets residents in the middle of the income spectrum, directly addressing a growing crisis for essential housing, while providing residents with exceptional living spaces. Grubb Properties maintains a long-term perspective, and its careful and measured approach to real estate investment has delivered resilient and impressive returns. Grubb Properties has received numerous sustainability designations and recognitions and undergoes annual Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) assessments through GRESB. For more information, visit www.grubbproperties.com.

Grubb Properties' CEO Clay Grubb is the author of the book, "Creating the Urban Dream: Tackling the Affordable Housing Crisis with Compassion."

