

What Americans Say About Their Community Associations



NATIONAL RESEARCH BY ZOGBY INTERNATIONAL

FACT

Community association residents rate their overall community association experience as positive.

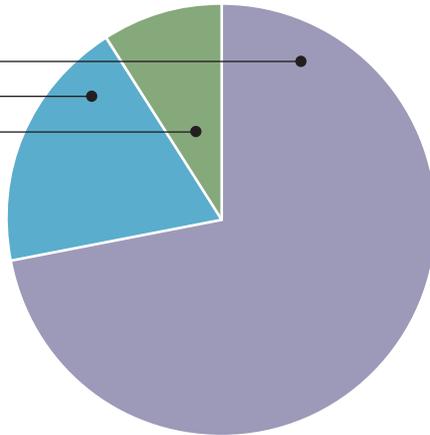
On a scale of one to five, with one being very bad and five being very good, how would you rate your overall experience living in a community association?

2007

Positive (4 & 5) **72%**

Neutral (3) **19%**

Negative (1 & 2) **9%**



Margin of error: +/- 3.8 percent

Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

2005

Positive 71%

Neutral 19

Negative 10

Nationally, close to 60 million Americans live in an estimated 300,000 homeowner and condominium associations, cooperatives and other planned communities. More than 1.8 million of these homeowners serve on their association boards.

FACT VS. ANECDOTE

Homeownership provides countless benefits, but can also generate anxiety related to property values, costs, aesthetics, neighbors and personal preferences, to name but a few. That's perfectly natural given the importance we ascribe to our homes and communities. With so much on the line, stress is inevitable, as it is in every segment of society. But when tensions arise in community associations, headlines are often the result.

What conclusions, if any, should be drawn from these isolated anecdotal reports of discontent? Are most community association homeowners unhappy? How do they feel about the homeowner leaders who serve on their elected association boards? Are residents satisfied with the services provided by professional community managers? And how do homeowners perceive the rules and restrictions enforced by their associations?

To get answers to these questions, the Foundation for Community Association Research commissioned Zogby International to conduct national surveys in August 2005 and November 2007. For both surveys, Zogby interviewed nationally representative samples of adults living in common-interest communities, called "community associations" in this report. The interview questions were identical, except for the addition of three questions in the 2007 survey pertaining to environmental issues (see pages 7 and 8).

The 2007 research affirms what community association residents told Zogby in 2005.

- They say their community association experience is positive.
- They believe their association board members strive to serve the best interests of the community.
- They think their community managers provide value and support to the association.
- They believe association rules protect and enhance property values.
- They are satisfied with the return they get on their association assessments.
- They do not welcome additional government intervention in their communities.

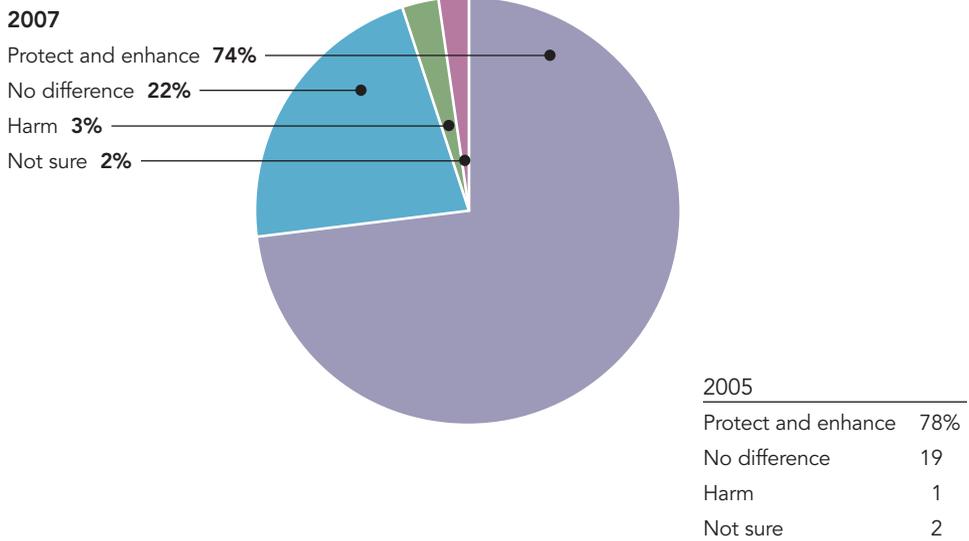
The data on the following pages affirm that the vast majority of community associations are governed and managed effectively. Still, as in all organizations, there is room for improvement. The Foundation and its affiliate, Community Associations Institute (CAI), will continue to work with homeowners, association board members, community management professionals and other stakeholders to make associations the best they can be.

This vision is reflected in community associations that become better—even preferred—places to call home.

FACT

Community association residents believe association rules protect and enhance their property values.

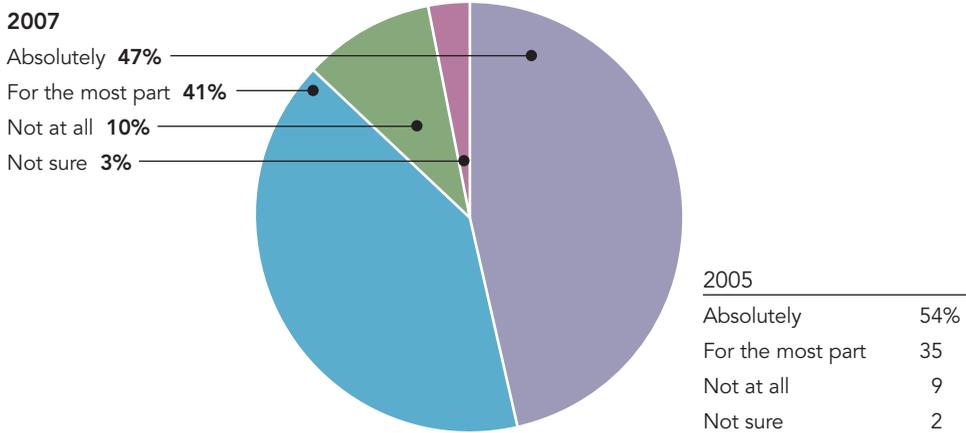
Do the rules in your community protect and enhance property values, harm them or make no difference?



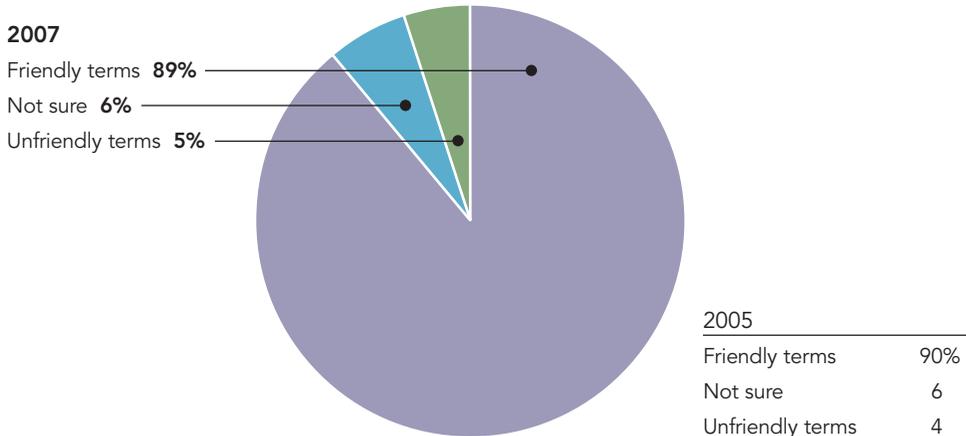
FACT

Community association residents believe their association board members try to serve the best interests of the community and say they are on friendly terms with board members.

Do you think the members of your elected governing board strive to serve the best interests of the community as a whole?



Overall, would you say you are on friendly terms with your current community association board, or would you say you are on unfriendly terms with them?



FACT

Community association residents say their community managers provide value and support, and they speak positively about their interactions with these professionals.

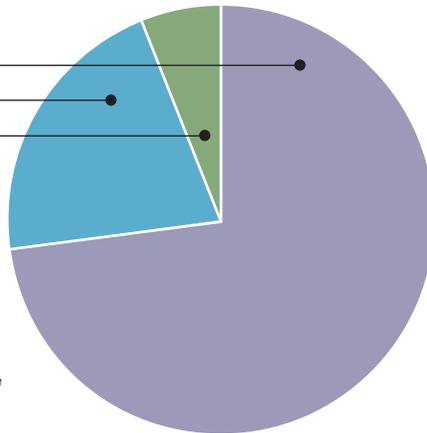
Does the manager provide value and support to residents and the community as a whole? ⁽¹⁾

2007

Yes **73%**

No **21%**

Not sure **6%**



2005

Yes 78%

No 13

Not sure 9

(1) About half of respondents say their associations employ a professional manager

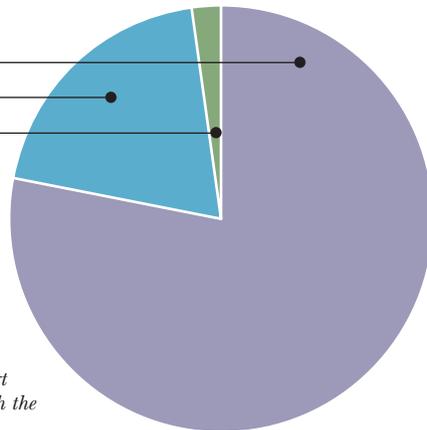
Was your interaction with the manager generally a positive experience? ⁽²⁾

2007

Yes **79%**

No **20%**

Not sure **2%**



2005

Yes 88%

No 10

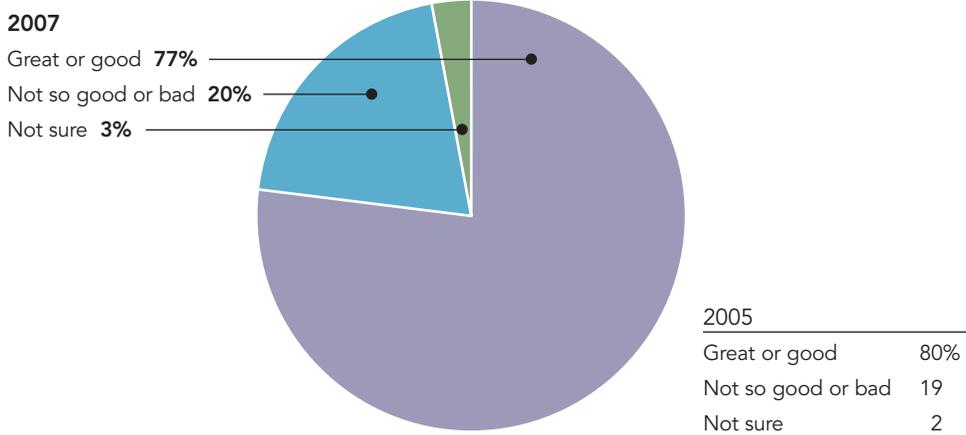
Not sure 2

(2) About 7 in 10 residents report having direct interaction with the community manager

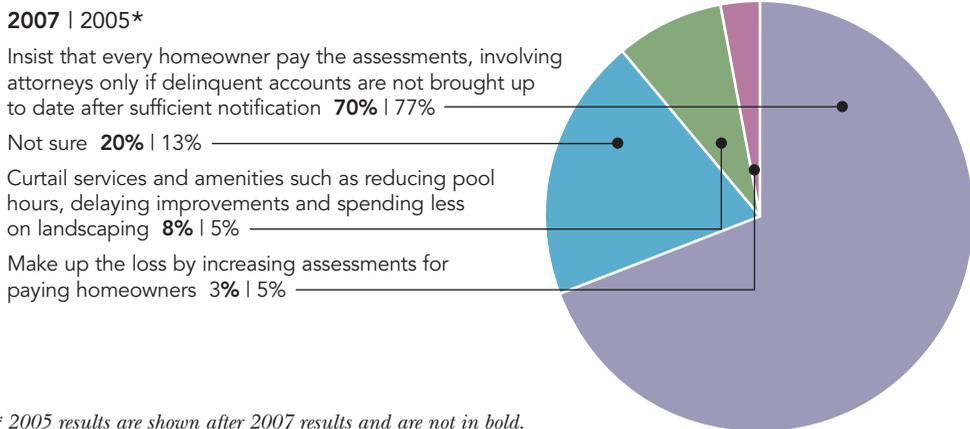
FACT

Residents are pleased with the return they get for their assessments, and they believe all association members should pay their fair share—even if that requires legal action against delinquent owners.

Considering your overall assessments and the services provided by your association, how would you describe the return for what you pay in assessments?



What do you think your community should do when residents neglect to pay their assessments?



* 2005 results are shown after 2007 results and are not in bold.

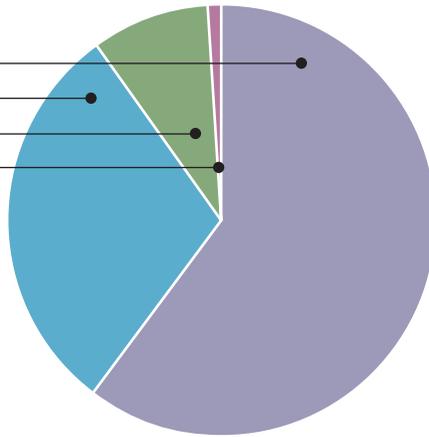
FACT

By a 3-to-1 margin, residents say they were more likely to move into a home because it was part of a community association.

Did the fact that your current home is in a community association make you more likely to purchase or rent your home, make you hesitant about purchasing or renting your home, or have no impact?*

2007

- No impact 61%
- More likely 30%
- Hesitant 9%
- Not sure 1%



2005

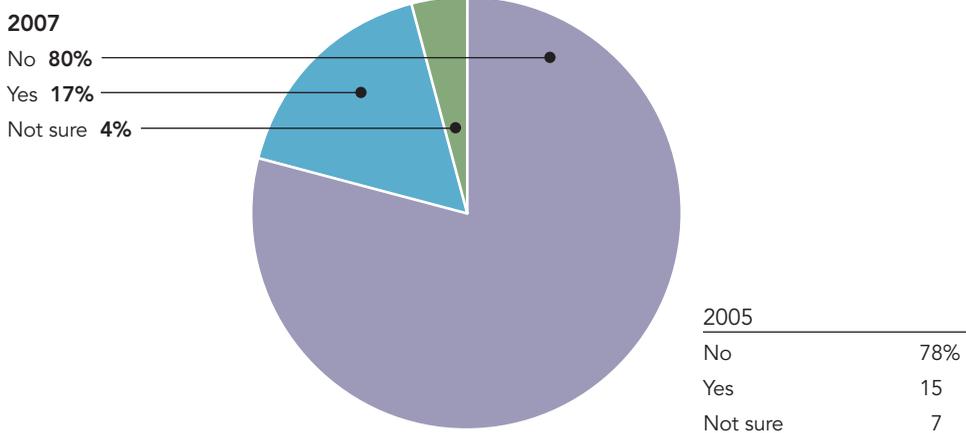
No impact	63%
More likely	28
Hesitant	9
Not sure	1

* 86% of respondents knew they were moving into a community association before they purchased or rented their homes

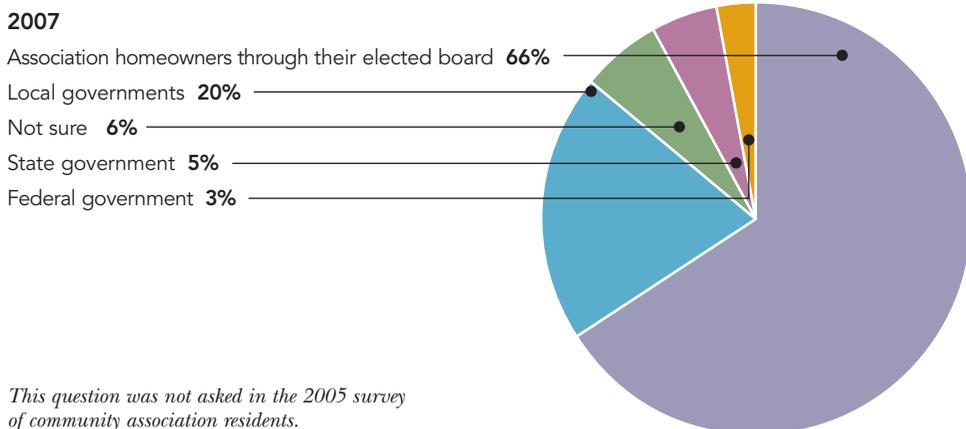
FACT

Community association residents do not want more government control over the management of their community associations—or over how their associations address environmental issues.

The governance of community associations is subject to differing state laws and regulations. Would you like to see more government control of these associations?



Who should determine how community associations prioritize and address environmental issues?



FACT

Residents believe their associations should retain the authority to resolve issues related to clotheslines and solar panels.

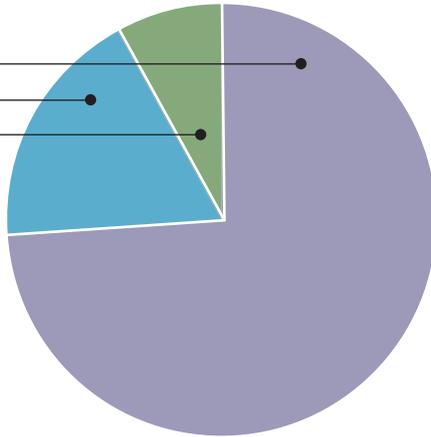
Should community associations, as private organizations, be forced by government to allow individual residents to hang their laundry on clotheslines that are visible to their neighbors?

2007

No 74%

Yes 18%

Not sure 8%



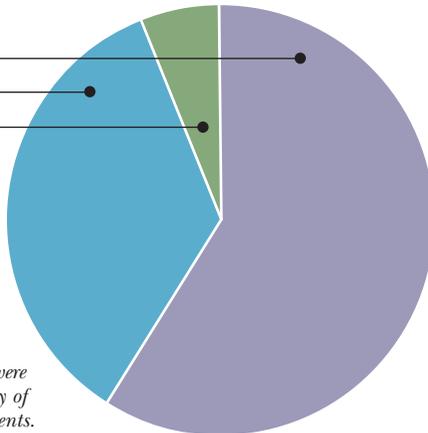
Should community associations, as private organizations, have the right to control the scope and placement of solar panels on individual homes to maintain architectural standards?

2007

Yes 59%

No 35%

Not sure 6%



The questions on this page were not asked in the 2005 survey of community association residents.

The **Foundation for Community Association Research** is a non-profit organization created by CAI in 1975 to keep the Institute at the forefront of scholarship, knowledge and insight pertaining to community association management and governance. Operating under the belief that community associations reflect a deep commitment to grassroots democracy, the Foundation is committed to providing research, publications and other resources that promote a better understanding of common-interest communities and give association leaders information they can use to make their communities better places to live.

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Zogby International

Founded in 1984, Zogby International is a respected, independent public opinion research firm based in Utica, NY, and Washington, DC.

Community Associations Institute

is a national membership organization dedicated to fostering vibrant, competent, harmonious common-interest communities. Founded in 1973, CAI provides education, tools and resources to the volunteers who govern communities and the professionals who support them. CAI members include community association volunteer leaders (homeowners), professional association managers and community management firms and other professionals who provide products and services to associations.

CAI believes homeowner and condominium associations can and should exceed the expectations of their residents. It's that vision that drives CAI's commitment to be the preeminent worldwide center of knowledge and expertise for people seeking excellence in the governance and management of common-interest communities.

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