

**The Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP)  
Graffiti Abatement Team  
*Community Impact Evaluation Report***



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## **Executive Summary**

**Overview.** This evaluation examines the effectiveness and impact of the Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP)'s Graffiti Abatement Team in Philadelphia based on survey data collected from city residents. By analyzing resident feedback obtained through surveys and assessing the team's perceived benefits to the city, this study seeks to answer three evaluation questions:

- What is the perceived effectiveness of CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team in promptly removing graffiti, as reported by residents in Philadelphia neighborhoods?
- How does CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team contribute to the overall sense of safety in the neighborhoods it serves?
- How has CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team influenced citywide community participation in graffiti reporting and prevention?

**Methodology.** To assess the effectiveness of the CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team, I implemented both surveys and interviews. I created and distributed an online survey throughout Philadelphia, targeting diverse neighborhoods with posters that included QR codes. The survey, designed with scaled and open-ended questions, aimed to gather community perceptions on the impact of graffiti removal.

I interviewed three CLIP executive leaders to understand operational effectiveness and community involvement in graffiti prevention. I also reviewed community feedback emails with before and after photos to evaluate the team's success. This approach allowed me to analyze the impact of graffiti abatement efforts comprehensively.

### ***Key Findings.***

- Most residents aware of graffiti removal services viewed CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team as positively effective.
- Residents who reported feeling unsafe in their neighborhoods frequently observed graffiti.
- CLIP leadership has an opportunity to increase awareness among Philadelphia citizens about available graffiti removal services in their neighborhoods, potentially empowering residents.

### ***Recommendations.***

- ***CLIP leadership should launch awareness campaigns to empower residents:*** Initiate a comprehensive campaign to inform all residents about the Graffiti Abatement Team and its graffiti removal services. Distribute educational materials and use various communication platforms to empower residents to report graffiti.
- ***CLIP leadership should target cleanup efforts in unsafe neighborhoods:*** Direct graffiti removal efforts towards neighborhoods where residents frequently report feeling unsafe. By doing so, CLIP can directly enhance the community's sense of safety and well-being.
- ***CLIP leadership should continue to engage with local businesses and community organizations:*** Partner with local businesses to broaden the awareness campaign's reach and deepen community involvement in maintaining and beautifying neighborhoods. This strategy will magnify CLIP's impact and encourage a community-driven approach to environmental stewardship
- ***CLIP leadership should provide an annual or seasonal newsletter to connect with community members.*** Issue a newsletter to continue publicly celebrating graffiti removal successes and build neighborhood pride.
- ***CLIP leadership should introduce a reward-based system for reporting graffiti.*** Make civic engagement fun by rewarding, and appealing to an increasingly extrinsic population.
- ***CLIP leadership should enhance recruitment efforts.*** Hold informational workshop events and provide training on graffiti removal techniques to showcase what it looks like to work at CLIP.

## Program Overview

### *Brief History of Graffiti in Philadelphia.*



*Although it is difficult to pinpoint the first person to spray paint graffiti, Philadelphia's Daryl McCray, known as "Cornbread," is believed to have been the first graffiti artist. McCray started making his mark in Philadelphia back in 1965.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Attitudes about Graffiti are Complex.**

Philadelphia isn't just the birthplace of America; it's also where graffiti, as an art form, first made its mark. Graffiti in Philadelphia has a broad and complex history that reflects the city's socio-political landscape. Emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s, graffiti in Philadelphia initially started as a form of self-expression within marginalized communities, particularly in neighborhoods facing economic challenges and racial tensions.<sup>2</sup> As the movement evolved, it became a visual language through which individuals asserted their identities and challenged societal norms.

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<sup>1</sup> Duboski, Monica, Michael Marriott, and Avow. "The Legend of Cornbread." Duboski Art Collaborative, August 31, 2020.

<https://duboskiartcollab.com/blogs/news/the-legend-of-cornbread-if-you-don-t-know-now-you-know>.

<sup>2</sup> Lilley, Sarah. Episode. Freakonomics Radio Network The Economics of Everyday Things: Graffiti The Economics of Everyday Things, no. 26. Freakonomics Radio Network, November 19, 2023.

An intricate relationship exists between graffiti and the city's political dynamics, with graffiti acting as a means of resistance. It challenges the hegemonic authority structure and questions the allocation of resources and public spaces.<sup>3</sup>

From a political standpoint, views on graffiti in Philadelphia are diverse. Some argue it represents a form of grassroots activism, challenging the status quo and providing a voice to marginalized communities.<sup>4</sup> Others maintain that it undermines the rule of law and contributes to insecurity, especially in neighborhoods grappling with various social issues.<sup>5</sup>



*Abandoned rowhomes in Philadelphia's Brewerytown neighborhood, marked by graffiti. CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team offers residents a choice of colors for covering graffiti, including brick red—a popular choice for its ability to seamlessly blend with the city's historic and prevalent brick architecture.<sup>6</sup>*

### **Graffiti removal strategies and efforts function within a complex environment.**

<sup>3</sup> Mitman, Tyson. *The art of defiance: Graffiti, politics, and the reimagined city in Philadelphia*. Bristol, UK ; Chicago, USA: Intellect, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Mitman, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Tebes, Jacob Kraemer, and Samantha L. Matlin . Rep. Porch Light Program Final Evaluation Report. Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services & Yale University School of Medicine, June 2015.

[https://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Community\\_Mural-Arts\\_Porch-Light-Evaluation.pdf](https://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Community_Mural-Arts_Porch-Light-Evaluation.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> "Community Life Improvement Program: Homepage." City of Philadelphia. Accessed March 24, 2024. <https://www.phila.gov/departments/community-life-improvement-program/>.

The city has employed a variety of tactics to combat graffiti. While some view graffiti as an art form that adds vibrancy to urban landscapes, others perceive it as a violence-causing defiance of order. Law enforcement efforts to combat graffiti often label it a crime, leading to debates between artistic freedom of expression and vandalism.<sup>7</sup>

The broken windows theory, a concept in criminology, suggests that visible signs of disorder, such as broken windows or, in this case, graffiti, encourage further crime and disruptive behavior by signaling an absence of control. In Philadelphia, this theory shapes the city's graffiti removal efforts. By actively eradicating graffiti, Philadelphia aims to deter vandalism and maintain public order, reflecting the belief that addressing minor disorder signs can prevent more significant issues. This approach suggests that graffiti removal is a critical element of the city's more comprehensive strategy to enhance safety and improve the overall health of communities.<sup>8</sup>

Graffiti removal strategies have played a crucial role in shaping perceptions of public spaces in Philadelphia. The city has invested significantly in removing graffiti, viewing it as an eyesore and a means to address more significant societal challenges. Removing graffiti is a step towards reclaiming public spaces, investing in safety, and responding to unruliness. Removal efforts enhance the city's quality of life by addressing the visible signs of disorder.

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<sup>7</sup> Lilley, *Freakonomics Radio Network The Economics of Everyday Things: Graffiti The Economics of Everyday Things*, no. 26. November 19, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Tebes, Jacob Kraemer, and Samantha L. Matlin . Rep. Porch Light Program Final Evaluation Report. Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services & Yale University School of Medicine, June 2015.  
[https://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Community\\_Mural-Arts\\_Porch-Light-Evaluation.pdf](https://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Community_Mural-Arts_Porch-Light-Evaluation.pdf).



*CLIP employs different removal techniques depending on the surface type: spray-bottle graffiti removers for smooth surfaces like signs and vehicles, power washers for non-painted surfaces like brick and stone, and color-matched paint, shown here, for painted surfaces.<sup>9</sup>*

### **Contemporary Attitudes Have Shifted.**

Philadelphia's response to graffiti has transitioned from strict eradication to a more subtle approach that recognizes its complex role in urban expression.<sup>10</sup> The city emphasizes community engagement and beautification alongside graffiti removal through initiatives like the Anti-Graffiti Network, established in 1984 under Mayor Wilson Goode, and the Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP) under Mayor Ed Rendell. CLIP's programs, including the proactive Graffiti Abatement Team, reflect a balanced strategy that addresses graffiti's underlying social issues while fostering community pride and maintaining urban aesthetics. This shift illustrates Philadelphia's commitment to blending public order with respect for graffiti's place in the city's cultural landscape.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Lynch, Tom. Graffiti Abatement Team Supervisor. Personal, October 2, 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Mitman, Tyson. *The art of defiance: Graffiti, politics, and the reimaged city in Philadelphia*. Bristol, UK ; Chicago, USA: Intellect, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Conway, Thomas, and Tygh Kane. Questions CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team. Personal, December 6, 2023.

***“Artistic graffiti does not bother me, but tagging is unnecessary, and hate speech is unacceptable.”- Northeast Philadelphia Resident.***

Social media, especially Instagram, is reshaping how people view graffiti and making it harder for the city's Graffiti Abatement Team to manage it. Tom Lynch, the team supervisor, explained that Instagram encourages more graffiti because it provides artists with another platform to gain visibility and reputation. This makes the team's job more challenging as they try to keep graffiti under control. Despite their efforts to clean it up, social media continues to promote graffiti culture, allowing it to maintain popularity.<sup>12</sup>



*CLIP's graffiti abatement employees paint over graffiti tags at the corner of Sixth and Washington streets. Graffiti removal is a free service for residents and businesses in Philadelphia.<sup>13</sup>*

<sup>12</sup> Kopp, John. "Graffiti Resurgence in Philly Powered by Instagram." PhillyVoice, February 3, 2016. <https://www.phillyvoice.com/instagram-fueling-graffiti-resurgence-philadelphia/>.

<sup>13</sup> Carroll, Thom. Gallery: Graffiti in Philadelphia. 2016. PhillyVoice.Com. <https://www.phillyvoice.com/gallery-graffiti-philadelphia/>.



***"Graffiti left unchecked breeds more graffiti and creates a sense of hopelessness and despair. CLIP's efforts change that perception and give the community a sense of pride, especially when we work together to accomplish the task."- Thomas Conway, Executive Director of CLIP.***

### ***Background of CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team***

The Graffiti Abatement Team was created in 1996 by then-Mayor Ed Rendell to combat graffiti, which Mayor Rendell saw as detrimental to businesses and potentially scaring away customers and investors. The Graffiti Abatement Team is the key contributor to Philadelphia's battle against graffiti and vandalism. As the primary organization for removing and controlling graffiti in Philadelphia, it operates efficiently, addressing most removal requests within 4-5 business days, without cost to Philadelphia's residents and businesses.<sup>14</sup> The team encourages timely reporting of vandalism. Individuals can report graffiti by providing details such as the address, zip code, property type, and graffiti location, along with their preferred removal method—either paint in a specific color or power wash.

The driving force of CLIP's efforts is its three main programs: the Graffiti Abatement Team, which quickly removes graffiti to maintain the visual appeal of neighborhoods; the Property Maintenance and Vacant Lot Program, geared towards educating residents about property codes and ensuring the upkeep of vacant spaces, promoting overall cleanliness and order within neighborhoods; and the Community Service Program, encouraging active participation from community members, reinforcing a sense of shared responsibility and pride in the community's well-being. Together, these programs form the structure of the organization's mission to create vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods through collaborative community engagement with adherence to property regulations.<sup>15</sup>

With over 1,640 requests for graffiti removal received by Philadelphia's 3-1-1 service in February 2024, graffiti removal ranks as the third most requested service in the month of February 2024.<sup>16</sup> The Graffiti Abatement Team actively removes more unreported graffiti than reported through 3-1-1. Tom Conway, the Executive Director of CLIP, emphasizes the transformative impact of their work, stating, "Graffiti left unchecked breeds more graffiti and creates a sense of hopelessness and despair. CLIP's efforts change that perception and give the community a sense of pride, especially when we work together to accomplish the task."<sup>17</sup> This approach highlights the organization's commitment to fostering a cleaner, more vibrant community environment through collaboration and responsive action.

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<sup>14</sup> "Community Life Improvement Program: Homepage." City of Philadelphia. Accessed March 24, 2024. <https://www.phila.gov/departments/community-life-improvement-program/>.

<sup>15</sup> Community Life Improvement Program: Homepage, 2024.

<sup>16</sup> City of Philadelphia 3-1-1 Data. "Philly311 Monthly Reports: Philly311." City of Philadelphia, 2024. <https://www.phila.gov/departments/philly311/philly311-monthly-reports/>.

<sup>17</sup> Conway, Thomas. *Questions CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team*. 2023.

## **Evaluation Goals and Questions.**

This project aims to document the Graffiti Abatement Team’s critical contributions to the City of Philadelphia and ensure CLIP leadership recognizes its value. These objectives align with my three key evaluation questions designed to measure effectiveness, contribution to safety, and community participation.

1. **Effectiveness.** What is the perceived effectiveness of CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team in promptly removing graffiti, as reported by residents in Philadelphia neighborhoods?
2. **Contributions to Safety.** How does CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team contribute to the overall sense of safety in the neighborhoods it serves?
3. **Community Participation.** How has CLIP’s Graffiti Abatement Team influenced community participation in graffiti reporting and prevention city-wide?

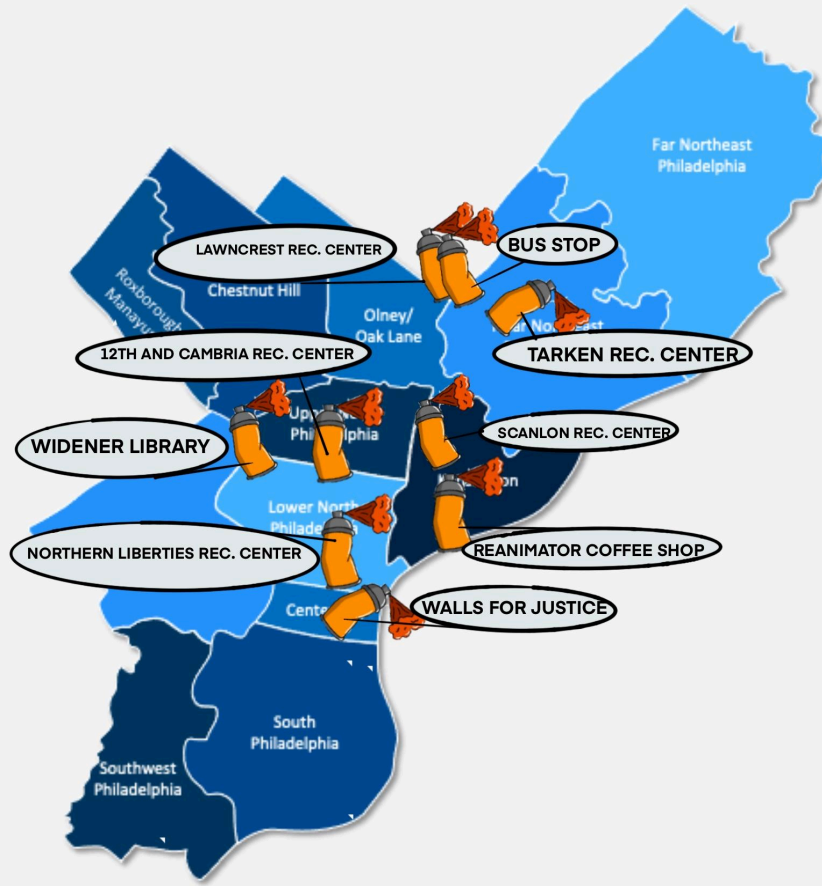
## **Methodology.**

The project provides valuable insights through an online resident survey and one-on-one staff interviews, which the organization can use to highlight the importance of their work.

### **Quantitative Methodology**

- **Survey.** Using Google Forms, I created an online community impact survey to assess the removal of graffiti. The study aimed to gauge community perceptions of the CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team, incorporating scale questions to evaluate their effectiveness, overall satisfaction, and impact on community well-being. Additionally, I designed demographic questions to characterize the participants.
- **Survey Distribution.** I distributed posters citywide featuring a QR code and a link to the online survey at critical locations across Philadelphia. These locations included five recreation centers, a local non-profit with heavy foot traffic, a bus stop, a library branch, and a neighborhood coffee shop to ensure a wide range of perspectives from different neighborhoods.

# SURVEY DISTRIBUTION MAP



- **Survey Responses.** The survey yielded 31 responses, offering crucial quantitative insights into the community's views on the CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team's efforts. I collected these responses from December 1, 2023, to January 30, 2024. To encourage participation, I offered survey participants an incentive: the chance to win a \$100 Visa gift card upon completing the survey.
- **Survey Demographics.** The survey raises concerns about the representativeness of its demographic data compared to the city's actual demographics. Most survey respondents (71%) fall in the 25-34 age range, skewing younger than the broader age distribution of the city. In contrast, the average Philadelphian is more evenly distributed across age groups, with a

significant proportion over 35. Racial representation in the survey is disproportionately skewed, with 87.1% of respondents identifying as White. This is significantly different from Philadelphia's diverse racial makeup, which includes approximately 44% Black, 35% White, 15% Hispanic, and 7% Asian populations. Geographically, the survey coverage is also limited, encompassing only 16 of the city's 48 zip codes, with nearly half of the respondents living in Northeast Philadelphia. The survey also records a higher concentration of middle to high-income earners, with over half reporting household incomes above \$50,000, contrasting sharply with the median household income of Philadelphia, which is around \$46,116, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The survey sample does not adequately mirror Philadelphia's demographic and geographic diversity, potentially affecting its applicability and the validity of its findings.

- **Analysis.** The analysis included open-ended questions for additional content and open feedback in each topic area.

### ***Qualitative Methodology***

- **Interviews.** I interviewed three CLIP executive leaders to evaluate the Graffiti Abatement Team's quick graffiti removal effectiveness, impact on neighborhood safety, and influence on community graffiti prevention involvement. These discussions offered insights into operational challenges, areas for improvement, and areas of success.
- **Community Feedback.** Executive staff shared a series of email threads that praised the graffiti abatement team for their hard work. I observed emails containing before and after pictures of vandalized and cleaned surfaces. The organization continuously receives emails like these on a weekly, if not daily, basis.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Conway, Thomas. *Questions CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team*. Personal, December 6, 2023.



*Third Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue. CLIP clears more than 100,000 pieces of graffiti each year.<sup>19</sup>*

## **Findings**

### ***Evaluation Question #1: Effectiveness***

- Most residents who know about the graffiti removal services view them positively. Residents appreciate the team's professionalism and quick response times. For instance, local Philadelphians praise the team's effectiveness in removing graffiti and enhancing community pride and involvement.

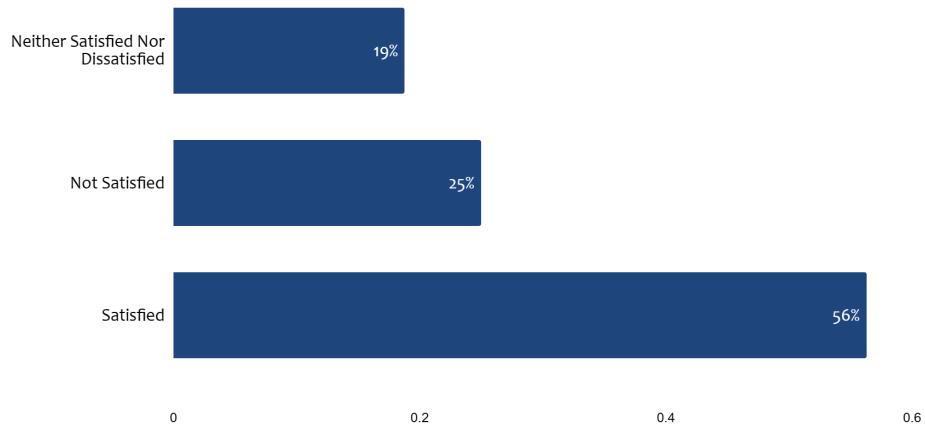
***“We wish all city services had the turnaround time you do! Graffiti gone in under 24hrs!!!” - Callowhill Resident.***

- Challenges are noted with the increasing influence of social media, like Instagram, which can make the team's job harder by potentially increasing the visibility and frequency of graffiti.

<sup>19</sup> Carroll, Thom. Gallery: Graffiti in Philadelphia. 2016. PhillyVoice.Com. <https://www.phillyvoice.com/gallery-graffiti-philadelphia/>.

- While the team is well-regarded by the community, adapting strategies to handle the changing dynamics of urban graffiti, especially with the rise of social media, remains essential. This reflects the need to continuously improve the team's operations to keep up with the new challenges of a fast-moving big city.

Are you satisfied with the current efforts to remove graffiti within the city?



***“It looks AMAZING!!!! Your team did such a great job!!!! I don’t have the words!!! I appreciate every single one of you! I thank you for always helping me clean up my community and make it better.”***

***- Stephanie Brown, Cobbs Creek.***

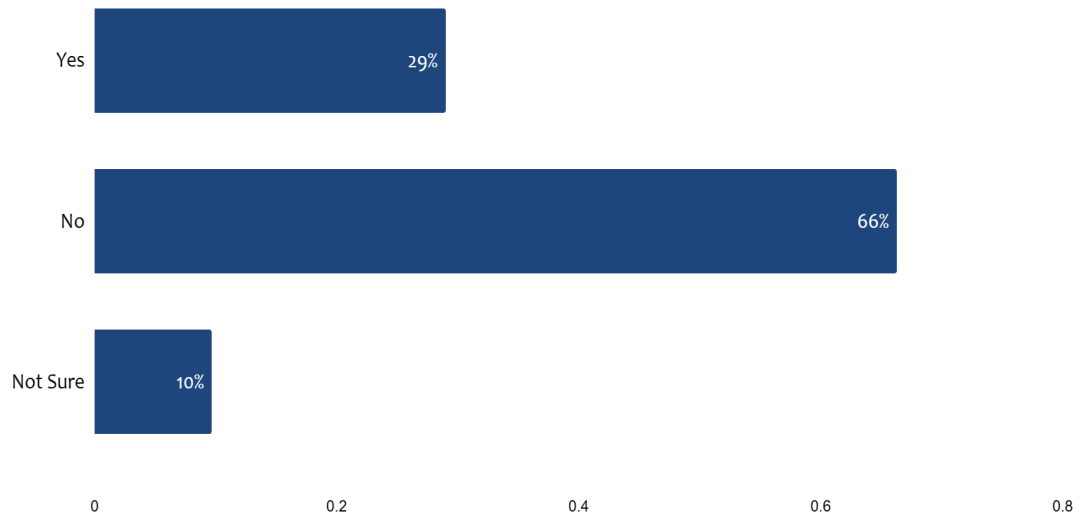
### ***Evaluation Question #2: Contributions to Safety***

- The resident survey findings suggest graffiti is closely linked to residents' feelings of safety. Those who often see graffiti in their neighborhoods consistently report feeling unsafe. In contrast, more than half of the residents who seldom see graffiti feel safe or very safe.
- These findings highlight what could be a critical role of the Graffiti Abatement Team in enhancing safety by effectively managing graffiti. Reducing graffiti cleans up neighborhoods and boosts residents' sense of security.
- The team's efforts in removing graffiti could contribute to maintaining and improving the overall sense of safety in the communities they serve.

**Evaluation Question #3: Community Participation.**

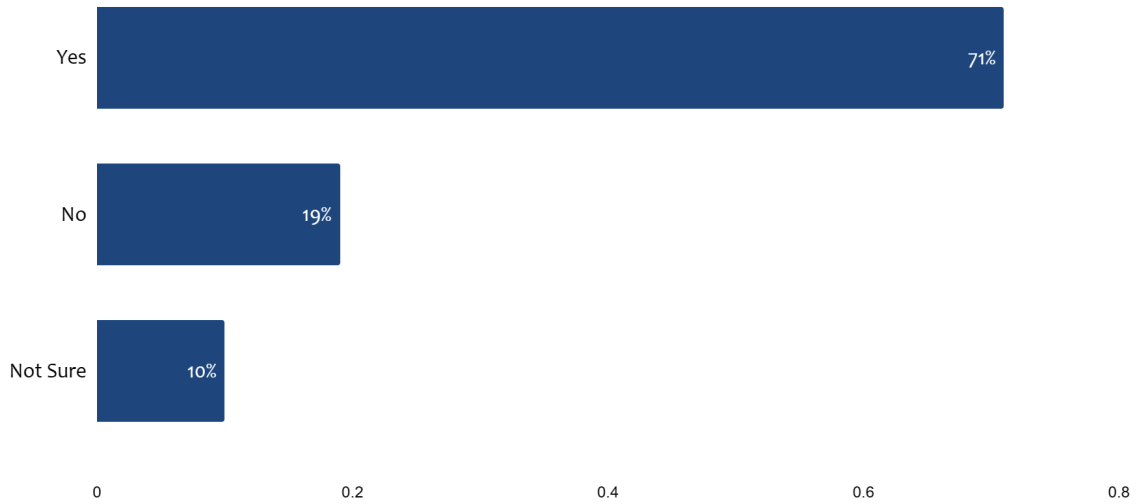
- While residents have a strong sense of responsibility to address graffiti, many need to be fully aware of the available graffiti removal services.
- A significant 61.3% of surveyed participants indicated that they needed to be made aware of graffiti removal services in their neighborhoods, suggesting a gap in communication and outreach from CLIP. This lack of awareness likely contributes to the 87.1% of participants who do not report graffiti, as residents may feel they need more channels or support to do so effectively.

*Are you aware of graffiti removal services in your neighborhood?*



- Despite these challenges, the data reveals a strong sense of civic duty, with nearly all residents feeling that addressing graffiti is their responsibility. This strong appeal to civic duty suggests solid ground for CLIP to build to enhance community engagement. By improving awareness and accessibility of their services, CLIP could empower more citizens to take an active role in graffiti prevention and reporting.

*Do you feel responsible for addressing issues like graffiti?*



- While residents feel a personal duty to combat graffiti, CLIP needs to improve its outreach and education efforts. Enhancing community awareness and participation could lead to more effective graffiti management city-wide.



*CLIP documents all instances of graffiti with before-and-after photos, alongside details such as location, date, and time, which are made available to law enforcement upon request.<sup>20</sup>*

<sup>20</sup> Conway, Thomas, and Tygh Kane. Questions CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team. Personal, December 6, 2023.



## **Recommendations for Program Improvement**

**Recommendations for CLIP.** The key findings from this evaluation suggest several recommendations for CLIP to consider for further developing its Graffiti Abatement Team.

### ***Priority Recommendations.***

1. ***Launch Awareness Campaigns and Empower Residents:*** Since 61.3% of surveyed participants reported being unaware of graffiti removal services in their neighborhoods, CLIP leadership should launch a comprehensive campaign to inform all residents about the Graffiti Abatement Team and its services for removing graffiti. Leadership could distribute educational materials and use various communication platforms to empower residents to report graffiti.

*Example:* CLIP leadership should develop a social media challenge to encourage residents to post before-and-after pictures of graffiti removal. The campaign uses hashtags, local businesses, and community leaders to spread awareness. Alongside, CLIP distributes "How to Report Graffiti" flyers in recreation centers, libraries, and local businesses, providing a step-by-step guide on using their website or mobile app to report graffiti.

2. ***Target Cleanup Efforts in Unsafe Neighborhoods:*** Those who often see graffiti in their neighborhoods consistently reported feeling unsafe. CLIP should direct graffiti removal efforts toward neighborhoods where residents frequently report feeling unsafe. By doing so, CLIP can directly enhance the community's sense of safety and well-being.

*Example:* CLIP leadership could conduct a specific survey to identify neighborhoods where residents feel most unsafe due to graffiti. Following the survey, CLIP organizes monthly community clean-up workshops in these areas, mobilizing the Graffiti Abatement Team and community volunteers. CLIP leadership can also publicize these events through local media and social networks to draw community support, showcasing the direct impact of their efforts on enhancing neighborhood safety.

3. ***Continue to Engage with Local Businesses and Community Organizations:*** The survey data found that 87.1% of participants do not report graffiti. CLIP should continue to partner with local businesses to broaden the awareness campaign's reach and deepen community involvement in maintaining and beautifying neighborhoods. This strategy will magnify CLIP's impact and encourage a community-driven approach to environmental stewardship.

*Example:* CLIP leadership should continue to partner with local schools to integrate graffiti awareness and prevention into their curriculum, organizing interactive workshops where students learn about the importance of a clean community and how to report graffiti. Additionally, CLIP collaborates with neighborhood associations and business owners to sponsor "Adopt a Wall" programs, where local businesses and residents take ownership of a wall on their block and promote cleanliness, supported by materials and services provided by CLIP. This partnership approach extends CLIP's current outreach and creates a sense of pride and ownership among community members.

**Other Recommendations.** The following recommendations did not directly align with critical findings. However, they do contribute to the organization's mission and goals.

- **Community Celebrations:** CLIP leadership should provide an annual or seasonal newsletter to connect with community members. A newsletter would continue publicly celebrating graffiti removal successes and building neighborhood pride.
- **Community Participation:** CLIP leadership could introduce a reward-based system for reporting graffiti. This would make civic engagement fun, rewarding, and appealing to an increasingly extrinsic population.
- **Recruitment and Training:** CLIP leadership should step up recruitment for volunteers and city workers through targeted social media campaigns and informational workshop events, providing training on graffiti removal techniques.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Exploring further research could be significantly valuable. These recommendations aim to directly address the program's effectiveness, contributions to safety, and community participation, enhancing the understanding and improvement of CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team:

- **Effectiveness Over Time.** To help develop a more profound evaluation process, the organization can conduct a study tracking graffiti's presence and its impact on residents' perception of safety over time, directly correlating with the team's abatement efforts. This research aims to quantify the long-term effectiveness of graffiti removal in enhancing community safety. This study would allow CLIP to measure effectiveness clearly and how its effectiveness directly aligns with its impact on the communities it serves.
- **Social Media Impact Survey.** CLIP leadership should evaluate the success of using Instagram and other platforms to engage the community and promote graffiti reporting. This study should identify which social media strategies most effectively increase community participation and awareness. The insights gained will pave the way for refining CLIP's approach to digital engagement.
- **Explore Similar Organizations.** The organization should consider undertaking a comparative study with graffiti abatement programs in other cities to identify best practices and innovative strategies. The focus would be on how these programs engage communities, use social media, and impact residents' sense of safety. By drawing similarities and differences, CLIP can adapt successful models to their local context, enhancing The Graffiti Abatement Team's effectiveness.
- **Community Participation Barriers.** Understanding barriers can empower those who fall through the cracks. By investigating such barriers to community participation in graffiti reporting, the organization seeks to understand why some residents do not engage in graffiti abatement efforts, aiming to develop targeted strategies to increase participation. Enabling more involvement could create a network of civic trust.



*CLIP's primary graffiti deterrence strategy involves quickly removing graffiti to reduce vandals' satisfaction and counteract their pursuit of fame and recognition.<sup>21</sup>*

### **Limitations**

Several limitations to this evaluation could have impacted the interpretation of findings. They include sampling bias, sample size, accessibility, and the time of survey collection.

- **Sampling Bias.** The challenge of ensuring a representative sample across neighborhoods introduced a sampling bias, potentially limiting the generalizability of the survey findings to the entire city of Philadelphia. Specifically, the racial makeup and geographical location of the population who chose to participate in the survey do not represent the city. Despite the evaluation efforts to diversify distribution points, inherent biases existed.
- **Small Sample Size.** Including three CLIP leadership staff members in the interview process may limit the breadth of perspectives obtained from the overall organization. A more extensive and more diverse sample could enhance the comprehensiveness of insights.
- **Accessibility.** When accessing the survey, participants faced several barriers. The survey, only offered in English, could have represented all languages spoken in Philadelphia. A scannable QR code directed participants to take the survey. Paper copies were not available for those without smartphone or internet access. Addressing these barriers could have resulted in a more representative sample of Philadelphia.
- **Timing.** I collected survey data in the winter, starting December 2023 and ending January 30, 2024. The Graffiti Abatement Team struggles with removing graffiti during winter due to weather conditions. The Team performs its duties outdoors, and if the temperature outside is too cold, the water-powered removal equipment and paint freeze. This skews survey participants into observing more graffiti on public property and businesses during these months.

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<sup>21</sup> Conway, Thomas. *Questions CLIP Graffiti Abatement Team*, 2023.



*The community plays a crucial role in graffiti management; residents report graffiti through the 311 service, and seasoned organizations receive free paint and supplies to help cover graffiti in their areas.<sup>22</sup>*

### **Conclusion**

The evaluation of Philadelphia's Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP) Graffiti Abatement Team reveals valuable insights into its effectiveness, safety impact, and community involvement. The project aimed to assess the team's perceived effectiveness, its role in enhancing neighborhood safety, and its influence on community participation in graffiti reporting and prevention. Through surveys, interviews, and community feedback analysis, key findings emerged. Most residents aware of graffiti removal services positively perceive CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team, acknowledging its professionalism and prompt response times. However, challenges exist due to the growing influence of social media promoting graffiti culture, complicating the team's efforts. Despite this challenge, there is a strong civic duty among residents to combat graffiti, though many lack awareness of available removal services. This presents an opportunity for CLIP to launch awareness campaigns and focus cleanup efforts in specific neighborhoods, supporting community engagement and safety. Addressing limitations such as sampling bias, sample size, accessibility, and timing in future evaluations is crucial for obtaining a more comprehensive assessment. Overall, this project emphasizes the significance of CLIP's Graffiti Abatement Team in preserving neighborhoods, boosting community pride, and encouraging safety for the residents of Philadelphia.

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<sup>22</sup> "Community Life Improvement Program: Homepage." City of Philadelphia. March, 2024. <https://www.phila.gov/departments/community-life-improvement-program/>.

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