

Student Government Association The Big Event Community and Volunteer Survey Spring 2024

Purpose of Assessment

According to its website (<http://bigevent.tamu.edu/>), “The Big Event is the largest, one-day, student-run service project in the nation where students of Texas A&M University come together to say ‘Thank You’ to the residents of Bryan and College Station.” The Big Event leaders worked with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research to understand how Bryan/College Station community members and volunteers reacted to their experience with The Big Event (TBE). This was the 19th time Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) helped The Big Event in assessing community members’ or volunteers’ experiences.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the student organization may take based on the results. However, The Big Event student leaders and advisors may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community and the event. Student leaders and staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students’ experiences.

- The Net Promoter Score® (NPS) is a customer loyalty metric that gauges how willing a customer is to recommend a product or service. Generally, NPS® below zero is an indicator that customers have a low satisfaction level or will not recommend a product, service, or experience. A positive NPS® (>0) is generally considered good, with the highest performers usually between 50 and 80. Figure 1 shows the NPS® scores from the residents to be +94, the highest in the past few years.

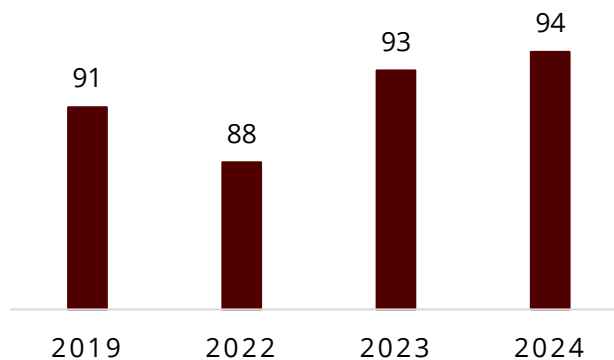


Figure 1: Net Promoter Scores®

- Residents enjoyed meeting with students, and most found the volunteers hardworking and enthusiastic, and the residents expressed appreciation for the students’ work at their homes. Many also noted that The Big Event is an excellent opportunity for those in the community to connect with current students. Residents who were dissatisfied with their experience most often cited that the number of volunteers that showed up did not match what was promised or requested and their project was left unfinished.
 - The Big Event student leaders may want to review when and how often they communicate with residents to determine how many volunteers will be needed and what tools will be needed. If feasible, communicate with residents shortly before The Big Event to ensure nothing has changed.

- The Big Event leaders might share residents' comments with volunteers to provide a better understanding of their service and that their actions to not show up or show up late impact the expectations residents shared with The Big Event committee members.
- Volunteers expressed that they enjoyed the positive, worthwhile, and well-organized experience of The Big Event, as they believe that the experience was fun to be included in, benefited the community around them, and allowed them to find connections within their own Aggie Community. Many volunteers remarked how wonderful this tradition is for the university and will continue contributing to this and informing others to join for many years to come. However, some volunteers expressed disappointment about their experience with The Big Event this year, due to the belief that it might be more beneficial to serve members in the Bryan/College Station who need help and not "wealthy" residents who can afford professional help to complete these tasks. Some volunteers also believed that The Big Event was poorly organized regarding tool pick-up and drop-off and there was a lack of information and communication from The Big Event staff.
 - The Big Event student leaders are strongly encouraged to consider the language used when marketing for volunteers to better align expectations volunteers have of providing community service with the purpose of the event, which is to serve as a "thank you" to the community, not community service in the community.
 - Student leaders might want to examine how the tool pickup and drop-off are coordinated to ensure that volunteers have the proper tools for the job site they are going to.

Method and Sample

Two surveys were produced using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. The resident survey contained three questions: two quantitative and one qualitative. The volunteer survey was comprised of five questions: four quantitative and one qualitative. Due to branching technology, not all volunteers saw all the questions on the volunteer survey. Data for both surveys were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

The resident survey was successfully sent to 2,178 residents on March 23, 2024. Non-respondents were sent two reminders before the survey closed on April 1, 2024. Of those who received the survey, 1,367 responded to at least some part of it, yielding a 63% response rate (one percentage point higher than in 2023).

The volunteer survey was sent to everyone who signed up for The Big Event, whether they attended or not. The survey link was emailed on March 23, 2024, to 16,460 people who signed up to participate in The Big Event. However, 25 email addresses were invalid and were not delivered. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on April 4, 2024. Of the 16,435 people who successfully received the survey, 2,133 responded to at least part of the survey, yielding a 13% response rate.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the questions. For ease of reading, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are listed in order of decreasing 2024 means or frequencies unless otherwise noted. The summary themes are contained in this report for the qualitative questions, but the full listing is in a separate document. Comparisons to results from previous years will be made where appropriate. The volunteer survey was last administered in 2022. This report is divided into two sections: Resident Survey and Volunteer Survey.

Resident Survey

Residents were asked how likely they were to recommend The Big Event to their family, friends, and neighbors within the College Station and Bryan area based on this year's experience. This question utilized the Net Promoter Score (NPS®), a customer loyalty metric that measures how willing a customer is to recommend a product or service. From a possible NPS® score ranging from -100 to 100, the NPS® was found to be +94. The 2024 NPS® score increased slightly in comparison to the last time The Big Event resident participants were surveyed in 2023 (+93). A positive NPS® (>0) is generally considered good, with the highest performers usually between 50 and 80. The breakdown of the NPS® categories of respondents is noted below in Table 1.

	2024 Percent [n=1,367]
Promoter (rating 9 &10)	95%
Passive (rating 7 & 8)	3%
Detractor (rating 0-6)	2%

Table 1: NPS® Resident Respondent Categories

Residents were then asked to explain their rating regarding the question of their likelihood of recommending The Big Event to others. Table 2 illustrates the themes most prevalent from those who were promoters and passives. Some respondents mentioned multiple ideas in their responses, thus the total number of mentions may exceed the number of responses. The majority of the comments were appreciative, with compliments for the students, the logistics of the event, and its meaning to the residents and the community. Quite a few noted that the students were very hard working and very respectful, even when the full number of students promised for the job did not show up. A couple of comments from residents included:

“Although only 4 of the 6 arrived at my house, the 4 were awesome. I felt like I was working with family. All were polite, friendly, and ready to work hard which they did. I was extremely pleased that the mulch was laid in both my front and back yard---about 80 bags. They worked hard and had fun at the same time.”

“Outstanding students who were very respectable and polite. Our team worked well together. Seemed to enjoy being here and we'd be delighted to have this team assigned to us again next year. This was our first year to participate in The Big Event and I am so happy we did so.”

Please explain the reason for your recommendation rating: Promoters & Passive	Number of Comments
Positive comments, students were hard workers, polite, did a great job, etc.	1,023
Great to connect with current students	95
Not enough students for the job/not as many students as promised/late/left early	35
Assessment of the project was incorrect/different than planned/needed more communication	27
Students did not have the necessary tools/skills	6
Incomplete project/lesser quality than expected	4
Residents cancelled	2

Table 2: Qualitative Themes Residents Promoters & Passives (n=1,166)

Table 3 shows the themes derived from the 20 comments of residents whose NPS® ratings were in the detractor category. The primary reason for the dissatisfaction was due to the number of students needed did not match the job, or the students were not at the site for the whole time, or no one arrived at all. The second reason was that the project was not being completed as expected. For some of the residents, this was not just a disappointment, but also an embarrassment for themselves and the university's image. One resident described their situation as:

"I have to mention that I am in a wheelchair and had my helper here to check on students in both the front and back yards, seeing if they needed anything or understood the instructions that I wrote out in detail... I have been relying on The Big Event since its beginning. This year I had quite a list of things to put by the curb to be picked up by the trash collector. But the students did not do as asked. And they threw away the instructions. The bad thing is that after working for 2 hours and claiming to have done the lists, and I was exhausted by interacting with them, ... As soon as they left my neighbor was knocking on my door and asked what had happened? She noticed that there was hardly anything by the curb as in past years, and (worst of all,) why were there cardboard boxes against her house, why were my gates left open (I specifically asked the group to be sure to close the gates as I have a blind dog), and why she asked were the students dancing in the street, taking many photos of the happy group against the wall of her house? Right away I apologized for the Aggies and asked her to please not say anything to her husband who is 90 and a great fan... My dad was a professor at A&M, and I met some of his students over the years and I am so glad he did not see the quality of students who were here yesterday."

Please explain the reason for your recommendation rating: Detractors	Number of Comments
Not enough students for the job/not as many students as promised/late/left early/ no show	13
Project was not finished	10
Students did not have the necessary tools/skills	5
Generally positive	2

Table 3: Qualitative Themes Residents Detractors (n=20)

The final question asked residents how they heard about The Big Event, using a select all that apply formatted question. Table 4 shows that the most frequent responses were past experience and friends/family/word of mouth. These responses have been the most common choice indicated by participants of this survey over the last four times the survey has been administered. Those who selected the other response option as their reasoning could write a response and the most frequent comments included that they've known about it for years, an email from The Big Event, the *Eagle*, as well as being repeat customers.

How did you hear about The Big Event? (Select all that apply)	2024 Percent [n=1,362]	2023 Percent [n=1,149]	2022 Percent [n=1,251]	2019 Percent [n=1,539]
Past Experience	60%	67%	60%	60%
Friends/Family/Word of Mouth	39%	38%	38%	43%
Television/Radio Advertisement*	10%	4%	5%	6%
Social Media	8%	‡	‡	‡
Posters/Yard Signs	7%	7%	5%	4%
The Big Event Website	6%	8%	8%	7%
Other	6%	6%	9%	9%
Tabling Event	1%	‡	‡	‡

Table 4: Big Event Marketing to Residents

* In previous years, the response option was Television Advertisement
‡ Option not available

Volunteer Survey

Volunteers responding to the survey were asked if they went to their job site for The Big Event. Table 5 illustrates that almost all (99%) students arrived at their job site for The Big Event.

Did you go to your job site for The Big Event?	2024 Percent [n=2,133]
Yes	99%
No	1%

Table 5: Attendance to Assigned Job Site

A follow-up question was asked to volunteers who reported they did not go to their job site for The Big Event to understand the primary reason they were unable to attend. Table 6 demonstrates the majority of students opted to write their reasoning for not attending. Students shared they did not attend due to circumstances of the original resident cancelling their help at that particular job site, and thus they either relocated or did not attend any site.

What is the primary reason you were unable to attend The Big Event?	2024 Percent [n=28]
Other	64%
Something Else Came Up	14%
Out of Town	11%
Sick	7%
Slept In	4%

Table 6: Reasoning for Not Attending The Big Event

Volunteers were asked how likely they were to recommend participating in The Big Event to a friend or fellow student. This question also used a Net Promoter Score® (NPS). The NPS® was +64, which was higher than the +55 from two years ago. The breakdown of the respondent categories making up the Net Promoter Score (NPS®) is noted below in Table 7.

	2024 Percent [n=2,133]
Promoter (rating 9 & 10)	73%
Passive (rating 7 & 8)	19%
Detractor (ratings 0-6)	9%

Table 7: NPS® Participant Respondent Categories

Respondents were then asked to explain their reasoning for their recommendation rating. Table 8, on the following page, displays the themes identified from the comments of promoters and passives. Some respondents mentioned multiple ideas in their responses, thus the total number of mentions may exceed the number of responses. Volunteers generally felt their Big Event experience was generally a positive worthwhile experience, benefited the community, allowed them to form connections, and was a well-organized event. Among the positive comments, respondents also expressed some frustration with their Big Event experience. They noted challenges with the site and site leader assignment process and a lack of communication from TBE. Some also criticized the tool pickup/drop-off, slow traffic, lack of parking, and bad experiences with the residents they were helping. One of these volunteers whose comment encompassed the top two most common themes said,

“There is nothing more rewarding than being able to offer help to people around our community who need it without asking for anything in return. Being able to see how I can personally change a person’s day is comforting and it reassures me I’m an Aggie for the right reasons.”

Please explain the reason for your recommendation rating: Promoters & Passive	Number of Comments
Positive comments, generally (fun, worthwhile, rewarding experience, etc.)	688
Community impact of The Big Event/Serving the community	481
Made friends, connected with others, and felt part of the Aggie community	195
Well organized	61
Tool pickup and drop off: need speeding up/increase efficiency of the tool gathering/ distribution/return process, long lines, disorganized	38
Site and site leader assignment process issues, challenges for individual sign-ups, communication lacking from The Big Event, inadequate number of students assigned to site	35
Service hours or resume building	24
Miscellaneous	18
Recommendations for change, include only service projects for those in need within the poorer parts of Bryan/College Station	10
Traffic and parking issues	9
Bad experience with residents	8

Table 8: Themes- Rating reasons of Promoters and Passives (n=1,196)

Table 9 displays the categorized summary themes from the 136 detractors’ comments describing the reason for their lower ratings of The Big Event. A few volunteers would prefer focusing their service during The Big Event on those members of the Bryan/College Station community in need, and not working for wealthy, able citizens who could hire the work professionally done. Other themes that emerged included the overall poor organization of tool pick-up and drop-off, a lack of information from The Big Event staff, and overall negative comments.

Please explain the reason for your recommendation rating: Detractors	Number of Comments
Households do not need help when they can complete the tasks themselves or hire someone to do so	33
Poor organization of tool pick-up and drop-off	26
Overall negative comments	22
Incorrect information, poor organization from The Big Event including not having enough people, wrong tools provided, check-in process, and lack of available help from The Big Event	21
Miscellaneous (NA, one-word, positive)	14
The volunteers were not equipped to do the tasks asked	12
Issues with the resident	9
Volunteers suggested other ways of helping the community including food pantries, non-profits, schools, picking up trash in local parks, women’s clinics, and more	6
Bad traffic and limited parking	6
No food or water provided	5
Great way to give back to the Bryan/College Station community	5
Cancellation by the resident	3
Volunteers were injured	2
TBE was organized well	1

Table 9: Themes-Rating Reasons of Detractors (n=136)

A new question asked volunteers to rate their level of agreement or disagreement about whether they felt that they made an impact in the community. Table 10 shows that almost all of the volunteers felt they made an impact in the community.

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (sd) [n=2,133]
I made an impact in the community through my assigned job site.	54%	42%	3%	1%	3.48 (.63)

Table 10: Individual Impact on the Community

Based on the Universal Identification Numbers (UINs) of volunteers provided by The Big Event, demographics were gathered from the student database. Table 11, below and continued on the following page, shows the survey respondents and all volunteers who received the survey. The table is in descending order by survey respondents for each category. Affiliation data (faculty, staff, or student) was missing for 59 individuals and 78 individuals were missing demographic data. Those individuals were excluded from the demographic analysis. The majority of volunteers were undergraduate students, in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering, female, not first-generation, White, and lived off campus.

	Survey Respondents [n=2,125]	Volunteers [n=16,382]
Classification		
Senior	29%	31%
Junior	26%	26%
Sophomore	25%	26%
Freshman	13%	14%
Masters	5%	3%
Doctoral	1%	<1%
Professional (Medical, Pharmacy, Veterinary, and Law)	<1%	<1%
Post-Bachelor undergraduate degree or non-degree	<1%	<1%
Undergraduate Non-degree	<1%	<1%
Primary College/School		
Arts and Sciences	28%	28%
Engineering	28%	25%
Agriculture	12%	11%
Business	10%	12%
Education	6%	6%
General Studies	3%	4%
Other/Exchange/Galveston	3%	3%
Public Health	3%	3%
Architecture	3%	3%
Bush	3%	3%
Performance and Visualization	1%	1%
Nursing	<1%	1%
Medicine	<1%	<1%
Veterinary Medicine	<1%	<1%
Pharmacy	<1%	<1%
School of Law	<1%	<1%

	Survey Respondents [n=2,125]	Volunteers [n=16,382]
Ethnic Origin		
White	55%	54%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	23%	25%
Asian	13%	13%
Multi-racial excluding black	3%	3%
International	3%	1%
Black or multi-racial with black	2%	2%
Unknown or Not Reported	1%	<1%
American Indian	<1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
First Generation Student		
Not First Generation	78%	80%
First Generation	16%	17%
Unknown	6%	3%
Sex		
Female	64%	58%
Male	36%	42%
On Campus Residence Status		
Off Campus Residents	73%	75%
On Campus Residents	27%	25%
Affiliation		
Student	100%	100%
Staff & Faculty	<1%	<1%

Table 11 – 2024 Big Event Volunteer Demographics

Department Background

The Big Event is a committee of the Student Government Association (SGA). The mission statement for The Big Event states:

Through service-oriented activities, The Big Event promotes campus and community unity as students come together for one day to express their gratitude for the support from the surrounding community.

The mission is accomplished by asking community members to submit ideas for personal service projects such as doing tasks within their houses, painting walls on their exterior property, and digging ditches. Volunteers sign up as individuals or with groups and receive a community task to focus on during the designated day. This year's The Big Event was held on March 23, 2024.

Project Details

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) provides quality assessment services, resources, and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through SAPAR can be found at <https://sapar.tamu.edu/results/>.

To work with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://sapar.tamu.edu/aqform/>.

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