

2.0 Community Outreach

This Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) has been developed to identify ways to facilitate fair and equal access to housing for all residents of Los Angeles County. To identify issues and impediments relevant to County residents, the CDC conducted a community outreach program that included a series of five community workshops, for which the CDC invited participation by residents, service providers, realtors, lenders, and community groups. In addition, a community survey designed to solicit issues and concerns regarding fair housing was distributed to each participating jurisdiction. The survey was made available on the CDC website and was circulated at each of the five community workshops. Fair housing needs and issues identified by CDC staff, elected officials, lenders, and service providers, as well as input from residents, has been incorporated throughout the AI. This section describes the community outreach program conducted by the CDC to help formulate the AI.

Outreach to the Community

The community outreach program encouraged input from residents on fair housing issues such as discrimination, housing impediments, housing trends, and issues. Outreach also enabled the public to identify the most pressing unmet needs and help devise strategies for addressing those needs within the context of the AI. To encourage community participation in the preparation of the 2003-2008 Consolidated Plan, including the development of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, several methods were used to solicit public input.

Community Meetings for the Consolidated Plan

Eight community meetings were conducted throughout the Urban County in September and October of 2002 to receive input on the overall needs and priorities for the Consolidated Plan. Citizens were invited to attend the meetings to learn about the programs and services available to them and also to express their views on neighborhood needs. Invitations were mailed to over 37,000 residents residing in communities near each of the 8 meeting venues. Over 500 residents attended the community meetings related to the Consolidated Plan.

Housing and Community Development Needs Survey

A **Housing and Community Development Needs Survey** available in English, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese was distributed to assess the housing and community development needs in the Urban County. The survey also included fair housing questions to assess the nature and extent of fair housing issues. Over 4,500 surveys were returned, with over 2,618 respondents providing input on fair housing issues. To ensure a high survey return, the survey outreach plan included the following methods:

- **Direct Mailings:** A total of 1,026 surveys were mailed to residents on the CDC's mailing list comprised of attendees of annual community meetings. Additionally, 1,800 surveys were mailed to a random sample of 10 percent of the County's Section 8 residents. Surveys were offered in English and Spanish.
- **Media Campaign:** Newspaper display ads were posted and press releases were issued to newspapers of general circulation, local community newspapers, and language-specific newspapers. The ads and press releases included information on the eight community meetings and information on completing the survey via the webpage and contact information to request a hard copy survey. The Survey was presented at the eight community meetings and completed by meeting participants.
- **Internet:** The Survey in English, Spanish, Chinese and Russian was available via the internet. These responses have been combined with the surveys received through other avenues (community workshops, distribution and public locations).
- **CDBG-Funded Agencies:** A bulletin was distributed to the agencies, encouraging program participants to complete the survey. Completed surveys were returned to the CDC for data entry.
- **Participating Cities:** Each of the 48 participating cities used the survey as part of their citizen participation process. The results of the participating cities' survey are intended to guide decision-making at the local level during the ensuing five years of the consolidated planning period.

Community Meetings for the AI

An additional five community meetings specific to the AI were held throughout the County, one in each of the five supervisorial districts. The meetings were held over a two-week period in November of 2002. The locations and dates of the meetings are presented in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1
Community Meetings**

District	Location	Date
District 1	East Los Angeles Services Center, Los Angeles	November 20, 2002
District 2	AC Bilbrew Library, Los Angeles	November 14, 2002
District 3	Plummer Park Community Center, West Hollywood	November 21, 2002
District 4	South Whittier Resource Center, Whittier	November 18, 2002
District 5	Covina City Council Chambers, Covina	November 25, 2002

Almost 400 invitations were sent out to staffs of participating cities and the County, fair housing service providers, lenders, affordable housing developers, faith-based organizations, legal aid service agencies, homeless service providers, and real estate associations and agents.

Notice for the AI community workshops was posted on the CDC website on both the Public Notice and Home Page sections. A press release was provided to multicultural radio stations serving the area. Public notices regarding the workshops were posted in local newspapers of general circulation in English and Spanish, including:

- *Los Angeles Times*
- *La Opinion*
- *Central Wave*
- *Whittier Daily News*
- *Eastside Sun*
- *Los Angeles Independent*
- *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*

In several instances (the *Los Angeles Times* and *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*), a small article was written about the workshop describing the workshop, location, and time.

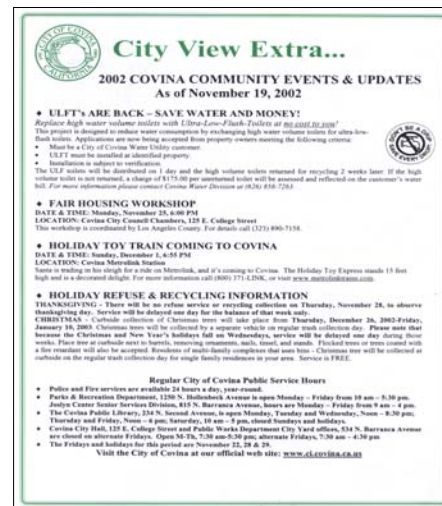
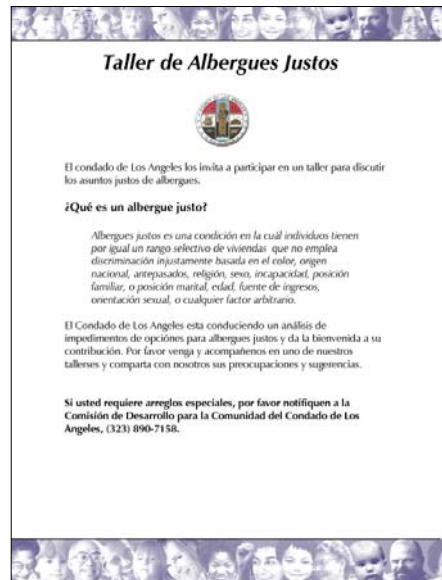
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 Flyers in both English and Spanish were available at public counters and were posted at workshop locations up to two weeks in advance.

Community workshop flyers were available and posted at the five community workshop locations up to two weeks in advance, including the Covina City Hall, West Hollywood City Hall, Plummer Park Community Center (West Hollywood), AC Bilbrew Library, South Whittier Resource Center, and East Los Angeles Services Center. In areas with a large Hispanic population, the flyers were available in both English and Spanish.

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 Information regarding the AI workshop was also distributed in the Covina citywide newsletter.

The City of Covina assisted with publicizing the community workshop by publishing an announcement in the City's community newsletter, *City View Extra*. The City of West Hollywood also included an announcement of the AI workshop on the local television cable station.

At the community meetings, participants were introduced to fair housing issues and the scope and process for developing the AI report. Participants were also encouraged to discuss general fair housing concerns and elaborate on specific issues impacting their housing situations and their neighborhoods.



Telephone Interviews

Phone interviews were conducted with several home loan lenders when possible, during which the lenders were given the opportunity to discuss housing and fair housing issues and identify any trend or pattern of impediment to fair housing.

Faith-Based Organizations

Faith-based organizations provide a variety of housing, educational, outreach, and other supportive services throughout Los Angeles County. A wide range of faith-based organizations were invited to the workshops, either by receiving an invitation via mail or personally contacted by telephone. Some of the agencies include:

- House of Yahweh
- Faith Housing Corporation
- Habitat for Humanity
- Good Shepard Center for the Homeless
- Second Samoan Congregational Church
- Lutheran Social Services
- Nehemiah West Housing Corporation
- Salvation Army
- Mercy Housing California
- Innerlight Development Foundation

Summary of Community Workshop Comments

Despite the extensive outreach efforts, participation in the community workshops was limited. Few residents, service providers, or professionals representing the housing industry responded to the invitations to participate in the workshops. One reason for the low participation at the AI community meetings may be the short timeframe between the AI meetings and Consolidated Plan meetings. The well-attended Consolidated Plan meetings occurred only six to eight weeks prior to the AI meetings. Many residents who attended the earlier meetings may not be inclined to participate again. Another reason for the low participation rate may be explained by the results of the Housing and Community Development Need Survey, which indicated that many were not aware of fair housing services and were unwilling to report issues.

Those who attended the AI meetings, however, provided invaluable input regarding the nature and extent of fair housing issues confronting specific groups and in specific neighborhoods. The key comments are summarized in Table 2-2. A full summary of comments is provided in Appendix A of the document.

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Results of the Housing and Community Development Needs Survey illuminate the reasons for low participation at the fair housing workshops. Refer to the section titled "Survey of Fair Housing Needs."

Table 2-2
Fair Housing Workshop Comments by District

Supervisory District	Main Comments
District 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a long waiting list for Section 8 vouchers and many landlords view them as a hassle. • Strong need in LA for housing for emancipated youth. • Credit is a large barrier for many potential homebuyers and residents. • Many assisted loans do not go through because it is a slow process and the home purchase deal falls through. • Section 8 is problematic because there is a long wait list and you have to be very poor to receive it.
District 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many “for rent” and “for sale” signs and advertisements for housing are in Spanish or another language other than English. • Steering by realtors to certain neighborhoods occurs in many communities. • General lack of fair housing rights and local fair housing services. • Some senior affordable housing projects have a high concentration of a particular ethnicity. • Difficulty in finding landlords that will accept Section 8 vouchers.
District 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many landlords in West Hollywood are unwilling to accept Section 8 vouchers so many people have to go to North Hollywood. • HUD’s Section 8 policies and demands make landlords unwilling to accept Section 8 vouchers. • Some landlords prefer specific ethnicities such as Chinese, Korean, or Russian. • Illegal immigrants have difficulty obtaining credit and finding housing because of the Social Security number and driver’s license requirements.
District 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High demand for housing for families. • There is a lack of knowledge about available first time homebuyer programs and loans. • Certain communities (South Gate) have an overly aggressive code enforcement program. • Some advertised loan rates are misleading. • Difficulty in finding landlords that will accept Section 8 vouchers.
District 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an increase in the number of reported cases of housing discrimination regarding familial status over the past three years. • Some landlords take advantage of Section 8 tenants by not maintaining the units because they know that finding an apartment is difficult. • There is not a local legal service aid center in this area. • High rental rates and low vacancy rates are problematic in this area.

Survey of Fair Housing Needs

A Fair Housing Survey (see Appendix B) was posted on the CDC website and was also sent to the 48 participating jurisdictions for distribution. The survey was also provided to participants at the five community workshops. In addition, the survey questions were included in the Consolidated Plan Housing and Community Development Needs Survey. In total, over 4,500 residents responded to the survey, with over 2,600 providing responses to the fair housing questions. Results of the fair housing questions are summarized below and in Table 2-3. Detailed tabulations of the survey results by participating jurisdiction are also provided in Appendix B.

- Depending on the efforts made by individual participating jurisdictions to distribute the survey, the response rate by Supervisorial district varied. The distribution of respondents by Supervisorial district is: 769 respondents from District 1; 89 respondents from District 2; 97 respondents from District 3; 390 respondents from District 4; and 1,273 respondents from District 5. The survey did not differentiate residents from incorporated cities versus residents from unincorporated county areas.
- Those who believed that housing discrimination exists in their neighborhoods or have personally experienced discrimination ranged from 11 percent in Districts 1 and 5, to 24 percent in District 2. Of these respondents, most indicated that they had not experienced discrimination personally but believed that housing discrimination is occurring in their neighborhood.
- Among all districts, the majority of respondents who had experienced discrimination firsthand did so through a landlord or property manager. This ranged from 73 percent of respondents in District 1 to 89 percent in District 3. The second most common discrimination was through a mortgage lender or real estate agent. Overall, very few respondents indicated that they had experienced discrimination via a mortgage insurer, although this appeared to be most prevalent in District 4.
- Among all districts, the most common basis for discrimination was race. This ranged from 28 percent in District 4 to 47 percent in District 5. The second most prevalent basis for discrimination was familial status, with approximately one-quarter of respondents indicating that they had experienced discrimination based on family type. Discrimination based on disability was also an issue in each district, but a higher number of respondents indicated that it was an issue in District 4.

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Do you believe housing discrimination is an issue in your neighborhood? Have you ever experienced discrimination in housing?

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Most common discrimination experienced by respondents was through a landlord or property manager.

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Most common basis of discrimination was race, followed by familial status.

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Housing discrimination
is a silent issue in Los
Angeles County.

- Most who indicated having experienced housing discrimination never filed a complaint with the appropriate agencies (83 to 88 percent), indicating that housing discrimination is a “silent” issue in Los Angeles County and largely occurs unreported and undocumented.
- Most respondents did not report the incident because they did not know where to report this type of complaint or they felt that it would not make a difference.
- The survey did not ask respondents if they had been discriminated against by a seller when buying a home. Often during the homebuying process, the seller and the buyer never meet in person and much of the transaction is handled by the real estate agents. Direct discrimination by the seller is rarely perceived or detected by the buyer.

Table 2-3
Fair Housing Survey Results by District

	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
Discrimination in Area*	60%	58%	63%	59%	50%
Personal Discrimination*	40%	42%	37%	41%	50%
Yes - Discrimination	11%	24%	21%	21%	11%
No - Discrimination	89%	76%	79%	79%	89%
Type of Discrimination					
Landlord/Property Manager	73%	78%	89%	80%	77%
Mortgage Lender	9%	9%	11%	7%	11%
Real Estate Agent	17%	11%	0%	9%	11%
Mortgage Insurer	1%	2%	0%	5%	1%
Basis of Discrimination					
Race	33%	37%	37%	28%	47%
Color	11%	20%	0%	6%	10%
National Origin	12%	4%	5%	12%	2%
Religion	5%	6%	0%	5%	3%
Family Status	26%	26%	26%	33%	29%
Disability	4%	7%	5%	11%	4%
Gender	9%	4%	27%	5%	5%
Report Status					
Reported**	12%	17%	15%	16%	16%
Not Reported**	88%	83%	85%	84%	84%
Reason Not Reported					
Don't know where to report	26%	40%	25%	42%	34%
Afraid of retaliation	15%	10%	15%	11%	10%
Too much trouble	5%	8%	20%	12%	10%
Won't make a difference	54%	42%	40%	35%	46%

Note: Table includes responses from participating cities and unincorporated areas.

* Universe is all individuals that responded yes to discrimination.

**Universe is all individuals that responded to the question.

Public Review of Draft AI

Websites

The CDC website included notices of public meetings and a copy of the Housing and Community Development Needs Survey.

Public Notices

Public noticing is intended to reach the general public in a most cost-effective manner. Public notices of the availability of the draft AI were placed at the CDC.

Availability of Draft AI

Copies of the Draft AI are made available at the following locations:

- CDC public counter at 2 Coral Circle, Monterey Park
- Upon request from the CDC