



THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE
OF GREATER CINCINNATI

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FIRST GREATER CINCINNATI HUMAN RELATIONS INDICATOR
SURVEY REVEALS NOTABLE GAPS IN PERCEPTION, LACK OF
CONNECTION TO THE BURGEONING HISPANIC POPULATION**
Significant Gap Between City, Suburban Residents

CINCINNATI, OH – March 13, 2006 – The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) of Greater Cincinnati, in cooperation with Applied Information Resources, Inc. (AIR) and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (NURFC), announced combined human relations survey results today demonstrating notable gaps between various residents' perceptions of progress and fair treatment of minorities.

“This is the first study of its kind and NCCJ is committed to biennial measurement of our progress. While the data clearly show gaps in perception, the entire community continues to strive toward a more cohesive and inclusive society,” said Dr. Mitchel D. Livingston, chair of the board for the National Conference for Community and Justice. “The challenges are not insurmountable; the work of NCCJ and many partner organizations is all about relationship building, which requires interpersonal and institutional efforts to change the status quo,” he added.

“The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center is the perfect place for us to release and examine these important human relations studies, which will frame our community's ongoing dialogue,” said Dr. Spencer Crew, president of NURFC.

The survey indicates that City of Cincinnati residents and the region's suburban residents are often disconnected in both their perceptions and their experiences. Within the city, 51% of residents say Cincinnati has made interracial progress, while 65% of resident outside the city say that's true. Within the city, 68% of residents say they feel “close to” African Americans, while 47% of suburban residents feel “close to” African Americans – this is compared to 56% of national respondents who feel “close to” African Americans.

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The survey also found notable differences between Whites and African Americans in perception of progress in both race relations and fair treatment by the media and police. “While 53.6% of White city respondents said that African American and White citizens received equal treatment from the police, only 13.9% of the African Americans in the city gave that answer,” said William Woods, president of Applied Information Resources, Inc. “In spite of the disparity, there has been evident progress in response to police reforms and increased attention given to police-community relations,” he noted.

At the same time, Whites appear less likely to acknowledge the inequality that minorities feel about police treatment and media portrayal. Close to 60% of Whites think police treatment is equal across racial groups, compared to 44% nationally, while 15% of African Americans and 38% of Hispanics think police treatment is equal. About 50% of Whites think media portrayal is equal across racial groups compared to 21% and 43% for African Americans and Hispanics. In addition, African Americans and Hispanics report experiencing similar amounts of discrimination with the amount of discrimination reported by African Americans being on par with the nation and the amount reported by local Hispanics being high compared to the nation.

Isolation of the burgeoning Hispanic population is evidenced by the region’s overall contact and closeness with Hispanics. Twenty-eight percent of city respondents and 21% of suburban respondents reported feeling “closeness” to Hispanics, which is compared to 48% for the nation. Additionally, about 50% of all respondents reported contact with Hispanics, compared to 78% for the nation.

“We are very pleased that we have a region-wide study that now includes a meaningful baseline of Hispanic opinion,” said Maria G. Molina, manager of Latin America Consumer Relations for P&G and an NCCJ Board Member. “We are hopeful that others will begin including Hispanics – a growing segment of our local population.

Regional residents also feel distance from Muslims, gays/lesbians and Jews, similar to national findings. Only 8% of regional residents report feeling close to Muslims (12% nationally), 22% report feeling close to gays/lesbians (25% nationally) and 26% report feeling close to Jews (33% nationally).

Younger adults living in the city were more aware of discrimination and racial tension within the community than older adults. A total of 61.9% of those under 40 and 67.1% of those between 40 and 55-years-old reported perceived racial tension as “very

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tense” or “somewhat tense.” In other words, of the White city residents who said relationships between racial groups in the community were “not at all tense,” 35% of those are over 55 years old; 14% of those are 40-55 years old and 9% of those are less than 40 years old.

“Younger residents are more aware of racial tensions, which is very hopeful as we continue educational and dialogue programs through the Freedom Center,” said Dr. Cathy McDaniels-Wilson, director of dialogue, NURFC.

In addition, young adults throughout the region are more likely than all residents to feel closer to and have more contact with African Americans, Hispanics and gays/lesbians.

Overall, survey respondents have reported a shift in the total number of Greater Cincinnati residents naming “race relations” as the most important issue facing the region, more recently only 11% of residents named “race relations” as the most important issues, along with the economy (23%), crime and safety (17%) and education and schools (also 11%). The year before, “race relations” topped the list with 22% of respondents naming race relations as the most important issue facing the Greater Cincinnati region.

There is agreement among African Americans, Hispanics and Whites on the most important issues facing our region today – the economy, crime and safety, race relations and schools/education.

Encouraging Signs

- Progress has been made since AIR, Inc. helped conduct a racial attitudes survey in Cincinnati 10 years ago.
- Young adults throughout our region are closer to different racial, ethnic and cultural groups than older adults and have more open, accepting attitudes.
- Private and public initiatives demonstrate cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration are happening.
- NCCJ and NURFC will continue to monitor and measure region-wide human relations progress through the biennial Indicator Survey and ongoing research.

“Following a series of meetings where we shared the indicator survey with a wide variety of groups, including African Americans, Hispanics, Muslims, Jews, gays/lesbians, law enforcement, youth and the business community, NCCJ will continue to engage and work with its many partners to measure progress toward a more welcoming and

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inclusive Greater Cincinnati region,” said Robert “Chip” Harrod, executive director of NCCJ.

Recommendations

- Continue partnership with cultural and sector groups involved in the survey.
- Convene meetings across cultural and sector groups to understand the different perspectives and build relationships.
- Use the findings to engage groups in development of collaborations and action.
- Leverage young adult connections with different racial, ethnic and cultural groups.
- Improve connections between all communities to help create a region-wide climate of respect and understanding.

“It is our hope that this report will help educate citizens about the human relations issues facing our region and serve as a compass for directing social and public policy for city and county governments, local media, the corporate sector, non-profit and grassroots organizations,” concluded Harrod.

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About the National Conference for Community and Justice

The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education. NCCJ is a non-partisan organization that works with individuals and organizations to facilitate institutional changes through its programs, advocacy and research. NCCJ has served the Greater Cincinnati community since 1944 and this past year became an independent affiliate of the national organization. For more information, go to www.nccjincincinnati.org.

About Applied Information Resources

Applied Information Resources (AIR, Inc.) is a non-profit community research and public policy corporation based in Cincinnati. AIR serves as a research and information resource for citizens and civic, neighborhood, religious, and human service organizations. It seeks to provide information to community leaders and the public in order that citizens are aware of, knowledgeable about and involved in issues and decisions that affect their lives. Since its founding in 1981, AIR has conducted research on issues related to federal, state, and local government, neighborhood development, housing, homelessness, the environment, regional trends, campaign reform, and race relations. For more information, go to www.AIR.Inc.org

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

Situated in Cincinnati, Ohio, on the banks of the Ohio River, the Freedom Center celebrates the legacy of courage and multicultural cooperation embodied in the story of the Underground Railroad. The Freedom Center uses a wide array of exhibits to educate the public about the historic and continuing struggle to establish universal freedom in both the U.S. and around the world. For additional information, contact 513.333.7500 or visit www.freedomcenter.org.