

# Checklist for Fair Housing Activities in the PY12 CAPER

	Pages
1. Provide if any how much money was spent on Fair Housing this past year and for what activity.	Pgs. 48-49
2. List Fair Housing Specific activities even those without money attached.	Pgs. 46-53
3. Create a map and identify where money was spent. Include census tract information on areas where money was spent.	Appendix G Geographic Analysis
4. Identify who received assistance, include race and ethnicity.	Pgs. 33, 34, 37, 39, 42
5. Include activities/actions this past year undertaken to address the AI.	Pgs. 46-53
6. Provide actions taken to address Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.	Pgs. 46-49
7. Provide evaluation report to address Affordable Housing, specifically progress in meeting the specific objectives, including the number and types of families served, the element must include the number of extremely low-income moderate income, middle income, and homeless persons served.	Pgs. 32-35
8. Provide evaluation on Homeless and the progress in meeting the specific objectives for reducing and ending homelessness.	Pgs. 28, 41, 44, 58-59
9. Address funding CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, and ESG where applicable.	Pg. 22
10. Provide steps taken to solicit comments.	Pgs. 75-76
11. Please indicate if notices were made to the Limited English Proficient (LEP).	Pgs. 75-76

# **Harris County Fair Housing Narrative Statement**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this statement is to establish a system to track performance activities related to strategies to address impediments to Fair Housing and barriers to Affordable Housing Development discussed in the Harris County Community Services Department's Fair Housing Plan, which is a part of the PY2008-2012 Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan lists five impediment to Fair Housing: 1) Overt discrimination of protected classes; 2) Discrimination in housing financing; 3) Insurance discrimination; 4) Discrimination through community pressure (NIBY-ISM); and 5) Discrimination through public policy. The following discusses accomplishments toward activities by the Harris County Community Services Department (HCCSD) to implement their strategies to address impediments to Fair Housing and barriers to Affordable Housing Development during a single program year. Included with this statement is a matrix reporting activities performed to address Fair Housing and housing barriers.

## **Section One: Citizen Participation and LEP**

Harris County has always considered citizen participation to be vital to the development of successful planning and community revitalization efforts for low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities. HCCSD has developed an extensive Citizen Participation Plan which can be found in the PY2008-2012 Consolidated Plan, and highlights of the plan can be found in the PY2012 CAPER.

### Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

During the Citizen Participation process, notice of community meetings and comment period were made to the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population in Spanish and Vietnamese. Notices were published in the Houston Chronicle and Spanish newspaper La Voz and posted to the HCCSD website. HCCSD also sent the public notices to over 500 interested parties via email blast which includes but not limited to individuals, county departments, local cities, non-profits, businesses, housing developers/providers, utility districts and healthcare organizations for distribution and information. Many of these interested parties are non-profits who advocate and serve persons in protected classes.. In addition, public hearings and community meetings conducted by HCCSD have Spanish and Vietnamese interpreters available. HCCSD staff who speak Spanish and Vietnamese are also available to consult with LEP populations in person, by phone or email.

### Other Efforts

In addition to a broad based citizen participation effort, HCCSD annually conducts extensive public outreach efforts in the Request for Proposal (RFP) Process that is used to determine the projects to be funded with CDBG, HOME and ESG funds. This action further ensures that the RFP process is a fair, open, and competitive process in which participation by organizations throughout the community is essential. The RFP process includes a number of opportunities for public interaction, including a proposal information workshop in which potential applicants are informed of the guidelines for the application and review process.

During the year, technical assistance is provided to sub-recipients, including instances where projects or programs are experiencing difficulties. When clients, sub-recipients, or HCCSD discovers problems such as program glitches and budget discrepancies, they are addressed and

resolved in coordination with HCCSD. Additional questions are addressed from individuals and organizations wanting information, such as how to establish a non-profit organization or apply for federal grant funds.

As part of the HCCSD's funding process, public areas in construction projects are being made accessible to persons with disabilities. HCCSD requires that within its *Affordable Housing Standards* that all common areas and facilities, as well as mail areas and spaces be designed to be handicapped accessible with particular attention given to the needs of the elderly and other special needs individuals. HCCSD also requires that all eligible housing developments funded by the department be Section 504 compliant. Additionally, all contractual agreements between CSD and project sponsors contain language that ensures construction projects adhere to all federal, state, and local laws regarding accessibility of all newly constructed facilities to persons with disabilities. To ensure that these regulations are being followed, CSD has in place regular monitoring and compliance activities.

HCCSD also continued to support with local funds and maintain the Housing Resource Center (HRC), which is a clearinghouse of housing related information and links in Harris County. The center's website has an interactive database of potential housing units, particularly for low- to moderate-income families. In PY12, there were over 5.1 million visitors to the website. Many sought housing assistance and referrals. The center reaches out to all cultures and life situations including but not limited to the elderly, disabled, low-income families, and female-head of households. The resource center's staff also actively works with individuals, who believe they have been a victim of housing discrimination. The county also collaborates with other local Fair Housing agencies, such as the Greater Houston Fair Housing Center and HAUL on Fair Housing issues and education.

On January 15, 2013, HCCSD submitted its new Fair Housing Plan and Analysis of Impediments along with its PY2013-2018 Consolidated Plan to HUD. During the year preceding submission (PY2012), the county conducted a series of meetings, focus groups, interviews and public hearings throughout the county seeking input from citizens, advocate groups, homeless and public service providers, CDC's, CHDO's and other interested groups regarding housing issues and barriers to housing choice. Staff also solicited information about community resources and problems through a community survey and needs/data assessment. The findings from the consultation, survey and needs/data assessment assisted the county to develop the Fair Housing Plan and Analysis of Impediments and to develop goals for the Consolidated Plan.

## **Section 2: Accomplishments for PY2012**

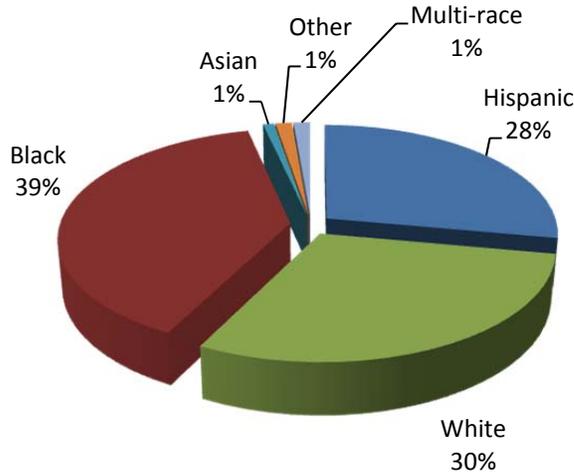
HCCSD's grant programs furthers fair housing through the allocation of dollars to support the construction of affordable housing units, by assisting low-income homebuyers with downpayment costs, and through the rehabilitation of owner and renter-occupied low-income housing units. The support of such projects not only serves to encourage access to affordable housing, but also furthers fair housing by increasing housing options across the county's service area and improves low opportunity areas.

### Affordable Housing

Furthering affordable housing encompasses one of the primary purposes of HUD and is therefore a major component in reporting and evaluating performance. This section summarizes

Harris County’s efforts to further affordable housing during PY12. These achievements utilized CDBG and HOME funds to promote the availability of affordable housing and increase the amount of decent, safe housing stock. The following tables and charts identify the number of persons by ethnicity.

**Chart 1: PY2012 Affordable Housing Accomplishments: Persons Assisted According to Race/Ethnicity**



According to Chart 1: Affordable Housing Accomplishments for Persons Assisted According to Race/Ethnicity, the PY12 CAPER reports 39 percent of Blacks, 30 percent of Whites, 28 percent of Hispanics, and 1 percent of Asians, Other and Multi-race were provided with direct homeownership, new construction of housing, housing rehabilitation or lead-based paint abatement.

**Table 1: PY 2012 Housing Accomplishments According to Income**

Priority Need Category	Units
<b>Owners : (153) households)</b>	
Extremely Low (0-30% MFI)	22
Very Low (30-60% MFI)	32
Low (60-80% MFI)	99
<b>Renters: (10) households)</b>	
Extremely Low (0-30% MFI)	4
Very Low (30-60% MFI)	5
Low (60-80% MFI)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>

*Note: MFI: Median Family Income based on a family of four*

According to Table 1: PY 2012 Housing Accomplishments According to Income, of the 163 households that received housing assistance, 153 households are owners and 10 are renters. Of the 153 that are owners, 22 are extremely low income (0-30% MFI), 32 are very low income (30-60% MFI), 99 are low income (60-80% MFI). Of the renters, 4 are extremely low income (0-30% MFI), 5 are very low income (30-60% MFI), and 1 is low income (60-80% MFI).

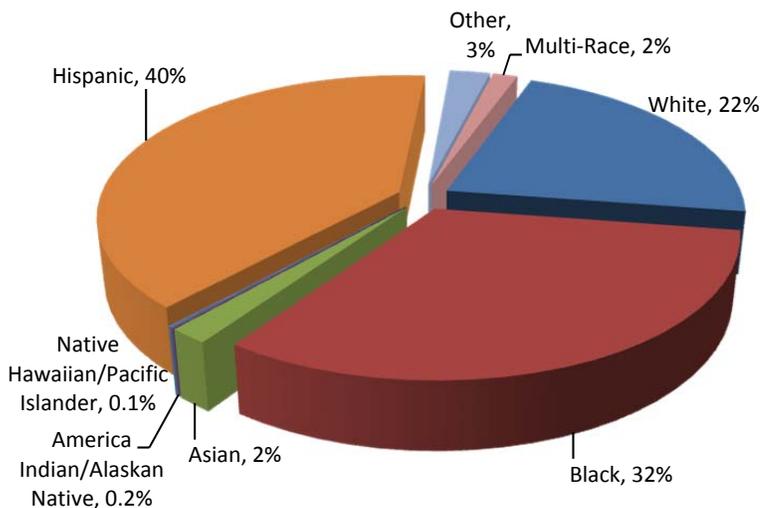
As part of the direct homeownership program funded by county HOME funds, the program educated homebuyers, lenders, real estate agents, and housing developers on Fair Housing issues. Through the policies of the program, the county sought to protect homebuyers from predatory lending practices. Homebuyers also received homebuyer counseling that included their rights under the law. Harris County also expended \$179,368.12 in PY12 CDBG funding for home repair services to serve low-income homeowners predominately in a low-income, minority concentrated neighborhoods. These

Public Services

This section of the statement is dedicated to summarizing program accomplishments in eight non-housing community development areas of eligible activities: public service, public facilities, infrastructure, crime awareness, special needs groups, workforce development, and area benefit projects. CDBG public service projects primarily benefited low-income limited clientele and seek to improve the quality of life of individuals and families. Special needs programs primarily benefited those persons, who are elderly, disabled, are infected with HIV/AIDS, and/or have a substance abuse problem.

Referenced in Chart 2: Public Services Activities Persons Served by Race/Ethnicity, out of the 4,308 total persons served through public services activities, 40 percent are Hispanic, 32 percent are Black, 22 percent are White, 3 percent are Other Race, 2 percent are Asian and Multi-Race, 0.2 percent are American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.1 percent are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

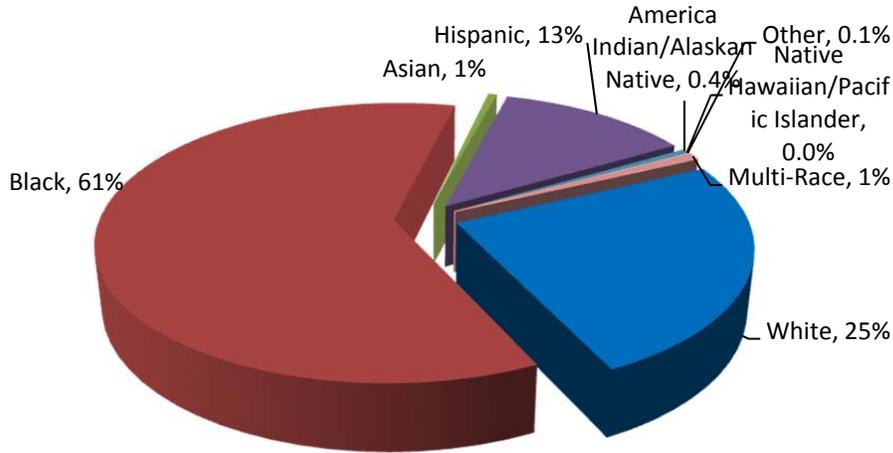
**Chart 2: Public Services Activities Persons Served by Race/Ethnicity**



Homelessness

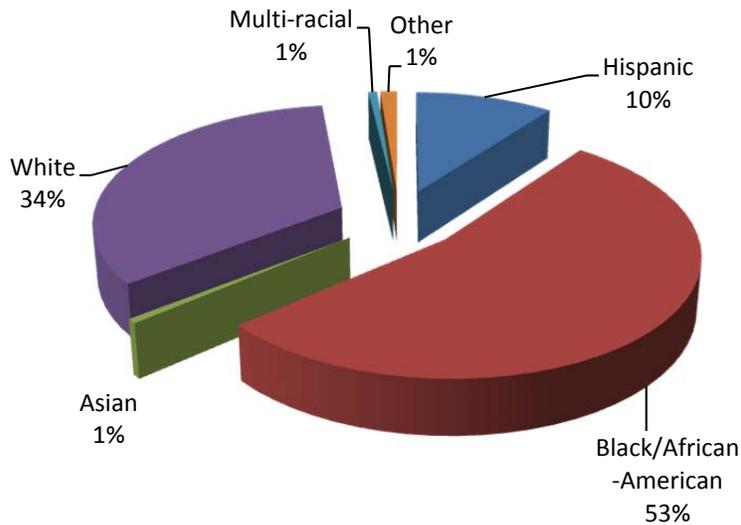
Under the Homeless category, the county expended CDBG and ESG funds and assisted 12,753 homeless person with shelter and supportive services. Under the CDBG category, funds utilized in PY2012 served 1,604 homeless persons. As seen in Chart 3: Homeless Activities for Persons Served by Race/Ethnicity, of the persons that received homeless services, 61 percent are Black, 25 percent are White, 13 percent are Hispanic, 1 percent are Asian and Multi-Race, and 0.1 percent are Other Race.

**Chart 3: CDBG Homeless Activities Persons Served by Race/Ethnicity**



During PY12, Harris County expended ESG dollars in assisting 11,149 homeless persons with shelter and supportive services. Of those homeless persons, 53 percent were Black, 34 percent White, 10 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent was Asian, Multi-Race or Other Race respectively (see Chart 4).

**Chart 4: ESG Activities Persons Served by Race/Ethnicity**



### Public Facilities/Infrastructure

HCCSD sought to improve low- to moderate-income neighborhoods, particularly areas with high poverty and minority concentration who suffer inadequate infrastructure and facilities. This section of the statement is dedicated to summarizing program accomplishments nine completed infrastructure and facilities projects funded by HCCSD with CDBG funding. Projects included water and sewer improvements, street improvements, and installation of a new park in HCCSD target areas. These areas are established neighborhoods seeking to improve the conditions in their local community.

### Section 3 Activities

Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 contains provisions to ensure that employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible, be directed to low- to very low-income persons, particularly those who are recipients of government assistance for housing, and to business concerns that provide economic opportunities to these populations. HCCSD participates in Section 3 and promotes and encourages contractors to hire Section 3 residents and Section 3 businesses through pre-bid and pre-construction meetings. To fulfill the responsibility of the Section 3 Plan, Harris County has appointed a Section 3 Coordinator to provide implementation and compliance monitoring of all Section 3 activities for CDBG Disaster Recovery Program funded projects. Additionally, an Advisory Board has been assembled to provide assistance in the development of the Section 3 program. In late PY2012, HCCSD developed partnerships with local employment organizations serving low- to moderate-income populations, local housing authorities, and local non-profits who provide housing and or support services to low-income and homeless persons. The PY2012 CAPER contains Harris County's Section 3 report under Appendix H.

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**PY 2012 Activities Performed to Address Fair Housing and Barriers to Affordable Housing Development**

The purpose of this document is to establish a system to track performance activities related to strategies to address impediments to Fair Housing and barriers to Affordable Housing Development discussed in the Harris County Community Services Department’s Fair Housing Plan, which is a part of the PY2008-2012 Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan lists five impediment to Fair Housing: 1) Overt discrimination of protected classes; 2) Discrimination in housing financing; 3) Insurance discrimination; 4) Discrimination through community pressure (NIBY-ISM); and 5) Discrimination through public policy. The following table discusses accomplishments toward activities by the Harris County Community Services Department (CSD) to implement their strategies to address impediments to Fair Housing and barriers to Affordable Housing Development during a single program year.

**PY 2012 Accomplishments to Implement Fair Housing Strategies to Address Impediments**

<b>Goal/Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Responsible Groups</b>	<b>PY 2012 Accomplishments</b>
<i>Strategy One: Aggressively enforce and enhance existing fair housing laws.</i>			
<b>Educate sub-recipients and community partners on fair housing laws/rights and responsibilities.</b>	1. Website updates		3 website postings/updates on fair housing topics
	2. Attending town hall meetings and other community housing events	HRC/SS	51 town hall meetings attended and 500 fair housing brochures distributed
	3. Provision of technical assistance to subrecipients, partners and staff		6 training for partners and staff performed
	4. Prepare and distribute brochures and flyers about fair housing laws.		500 brochures printed/distributed
<b>Referral and follow-up for fair housing compliance and redress</b>	1)Maintain complaint file 2)Referrals to FHIP’s 3)Referrals to FHAP’s 4)Referrals to HUD/FH office	FHC/Project Mgrs/HRC.	0 files referred to Houston Area Urban League for resolution
<b>Partner with housing providers and groups to ensure equitable application of fair housing laws</b>	1) Number of partnerships retained or created 2) Monitoring of rental testing for fair housing compliance	FHC/P&D	0 partnerships created to enhance equitable application of fair housing laws;  0 rental testing’s assisted.

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<i>Strategy Two: Eliminate discriminatory lending.</i>			
<b>Encouraging reinvestment by organizations and lending institutions in areas in need of redevelopment to eliminate discriminatory lending.</b>	Support/assist tax credit applications for housing development in areas of need within the county (see Concentration Policy for Multi-unit Developments)	P&D	3 LIHTC letters of consistency that aligned with the Consolidated Plan and HC non-concentration requirements were issued
	Support affordable housing construction incentives.	ED/P&D	0 projects applied and received CHDO affordable housing exemptions;  5 received re-certification
<i>Strategy Three: Eliminate barriers to affordable housing development.</i>			
<b>3a. Promote and support safe and affordable housing opportunities throughout the HC service area</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DAP continuation</li> <li>2. More support of New Home construction activities</li> <li>3. More minor home repairs</li> <li>4. More affordable housing unit rehabilitations</li> <li>5. Financing more affordable housing projects</li> <li>6. Inspection of rental housing units funded by CSD</li> </ol>	HCD	<p>163 total persons received affordable housing assistance through: Direct Homeownership Assistance, Construction of Housing, Rehabilitation of Single Unit Residential, and Lead-Based Hazard Abatement;</p> <p>112 households received DAP assistance, and 322 DAP information packets were distributed;</p> <p>10 affordable housing units constructed, meeting lease-up;</p> <p>13 home repairs completed;</p> <p>2,000 persons provided with rental assistance (SPC, SHP, etc.)</p> <p>1850 housing units were inspected, with all housing units passing</p>

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<p><b>3b. Promote Housing Resource Center as a clearinghouse for clients to identify affordable housing throughout HC</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attending outreach fairs</li> <li>2. PSA's &amp; Community news</li> <li>3. Ads in community papers</li> <li>4. Attending ngo/pvo meetings</li> <li>5. Visitations to senior/community centers</li> <li>6. Expanded website presence</li> </ol>	<p>HRC</p>	<p>14 events attended; 707 referrals; 5,188,513 website hits; 550 landlords registered with housing search tool</p>
<p><b>3c. Promote collaborations and partnerships with both non-profit and for-profit builders, developers, and other interested parties to increase the capacity for the development of affordable housing in the HC service area.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue soliciting housing projects</li> <li>2. Continue working with builders /developers on affordable housing projects</li> <li>3. Continue encouraging/ supporting the development of CHDOs</li> </ol>	<p>Development</p>	<p>10 new affordable housing units constructed with County HUD funding; 0 CHDO certifications issued, but 5 re-certifications issued; 3 LIHTC letters of consistency that aligned with the Consolidated Plan and HC non-concentration requirements were issued</p>
<p><b>3d. Promote and assist in the development of applications for additional funding to develop affordable housing in the HC service area</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provision of Con Plan Certifications in support of LIHTC and other affordable housing applications</li> <li>2. Support Homeownership Zones</li> </ol>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>3 LIHTC letters of consistency that aligned with the Consolidated Plan and HC non-concentration requirements were issued in support of affordable housing applications</p>

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<p><b>3e. Promote and provide TA for the review and revision of land-use regulations in cooperative cities that may present an obstacle to the development of affordable housing.</b></p>	<p>1. Reviewing local land-use policies with local officials</p> <p>2. Working with developers/ contactors to address land use issues.</p>	<p>Planning /Development</p>	<p>Survey cooperative cities regarding land use policies.</p> <p>Issue report on policies that may prevent the development of affordable housing.</p> <p>Commence meetings with local coop city officials regarding recommendations that support affordable housing development.</p>
<p><i>Strategy Four: Encourage educational activities that promote awareness about fair housing and individuals rights about fair housing choice.</i></p>			
<p><b>Educate county residents and community leaders about the fair housing issues and the benefits of affordable housing development in the county</b></p>	<p>Community briefings/project tours of developed affordable housing projects, particularly in high opportunity areas.</p>	<p>P/D/HRC/FHC</p>	<p>HCCSD sponsored a virtual tour of Harris County affordable housing projects during CDBG week to show the affordable housing developed in high opportunity areas</p>
	<p>Attending town hall meetings and other community housing events</p>	<p>HRC/P&amp;D</p>	<p>10 town hall meetings attended and 500 fair housing brochures distributed</p>
	<p>Prepare briefs for community publications and mass local distribution.</p>	<p>PIO</p>	<p>4 press releases/briefs distributed to local media</p>
	<p>Briefings to Community Center visitors about fair housing</p>	<p>HRC/FHC/IT</p>	<p>53 briefings completed</p>
<p><i>Strategy Five: Encourage assistance to families.</i></p>			
<p><b>Provide information and referral on housing counseling opportunities available throughout the county.</b></p>	<p>Provide referrals to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Homebuyer counseling</li> <li>▪ Rental maintenance counseling</li> <li>▪ Budget/credit counseling</li> <li>▪ Foreclosure counseling</li> <li>▪ Emergency housing assistance</li> <li>▪ Via the Housing Resource Center and Downpayment Assistance</li> </ul>	<p>HRC/DAP/SS/FHC</p>	<p>922 persons referred to various counseling programs via the HRC website and via direct contact referrals;</p> <p>309 households provided with direct financial assistance to preserve housing;</p> <p>7,581 persons provided access to</p>

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	Programs	<p>emergency housing and utility assistance, security deposits, mediation and legal assistance, case management and counseling;</p> <p>1169 persons provided access to housing counseling and other general services;</p> <p>529 seniors provided access to housing counseling and other senior services; and</p> <p>300 persons with HIV/AIDS with access to counseling and housing placement services; and,</p> <p>322 persons were referred to housing counseling through the DAP</p>
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