



CAHRO

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION
OF HUMAN RELATIONS ORGANIZATIONS

California Human Relations Commissions: A Survey of Needs, Capacities, and Interests

Kim McDonald

Dr. Dennis J. Downey
Faculty Supervisor

California State University
Channel Islands



California State
University

Center for
**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

C H A N N E L
I S L A N D S

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Executive Summary

RESEARCH

- ❖ Research partnership: The research was conducted as a service-learning capstone project in partnership with the California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO).
- ❖ Research purpose: The purpose was to gather information relevant to CAHRO's mission of serving and strengthening our state's local human relations commissions (HRCs), and to explore the feasibility of creating service-learning partnerships between HRCs and California State University campuses (through their respective Centers for Community Engagement).
- ❖ Research design: Data were requested via a survey instrument (delivered online via SurveyMonkey) from a population of 43 active Human Relations Commissions (HRCs) in California, with responses from 30 HRCs.

KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ HRC resources: Resources were measured in two areas—annual funding and number of paid employees. It was found that 52% of responding HRCs are operating on \$5,000 or less annually and the majority (66%) are functioning with less than one full-time employee. Although several HRCs reported receiving over \$100,000 annually, the majority of HRCs are under-funded and under-staffed.
- ❖ HRC issues: Issues were determined by asking HRCs to choose which populations they serve as well as which issue-areas they are currently focusing on. The top populations served are Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, Immigrants, and the LGBT community. Top areas of HRC focus are racial/ethnic equity, homelessness and housing access, immigration, and human trafficking.
- ❖ CAHRO Initiative, Bias-Free Network: Just over half of responding HRCs formally respond to hate crimes/hate incidents in their communities and half of our respondents are sponsoring programs and activities to prevent hate crimes and hate incidents. HRCs were asked to rate their level of interest in participating in a statewide Bias-Free Network; 100% of respondents expressed interest in participating (47% extremely; 53% potentially).
- ❖ CAHRO Initiative, Statewide Bulletin: CAHRO is developing a Bulletin that will contain relevant and inspiring information pertinent to the operations of HRCs. When asked their level of interest in receiving this type of Bulletin, 100% of HRCs expressed interest (76% extremely; 24% potentially). When asked regarding their interest in contributing to the Bulletin, 92% responded yes.
- ❖ CAHRO Initiative: California Human Relations/Service-Learning Initiative: When asked their interest level in partnering with CSU CCEs, 100% of the responding 26 HRCs are interested (58% extremely; 42% potentially), and many of those responded with ideas of projects that would greatly benefit from student involvement. With regard to proximity, 73% (19) of the HRCs interested in partnering in service-learning projects are located within 15 miles of a CSU campus. The remaining 27% (7) of interested HRCs are located 15-35 miles from a CSU campus.

Introduction

In Their Own Words: *What Does a Human Relations Commission Do?*

The quotes below represent a sampling of mission statements that guide the activities of Human Relations Commissions throughout the state of California:

Promote better human relations by working to transform prejudice into acceptance, inequity into justice, and hostility into peace.
Los Angeles County

Aid in the elimination of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination against individuals or groups...to promote good will and better relations among all people.
City of Pasadena

Reduce discrimination, increase cultural competency and improve inter-group relations.
City of Los Angeles

Create a community environment in which all men, women and children, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation, may live, learn, work and play in harmony.
City of Fremont

Promote a community based on social justice, with equality for all, and to eliminate discrimination based on race, religion, color, age, ancestry, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, place of birth, national origin, or disability.
Marin County

Address the causes of and problems resulting from prejudice, intolerance, bigotry and discrimination.
San Francisco County

Seek out the causes of tension and conflict, discrimination and intolerance, and attempt to eliminate those causes.
Orange County

Advocate for and take positive action to eliminate prejudice and discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, cultural background, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or other factors.
Santa Clara County

Promote activities that foster understanding, respect, and inclusion while protecting basic Human and Civil Rights. Empowering our citizens to exercise their motivation to be part of a solution.
City of San Diego

PART 1: BACKGROUND & RESEARCH DESIGN: DATA & METHODS

1. Background

Human Relations Commissions

Human Relations is a field that exists to encourage diversity and promote its value by supporting social policies and practices that recognize each individual as worthy of respect and equal treatment. Organizations devoting themselves to Human Rights and Human Relations began to appear during World War II, and the Civil Rights Movement gave birth to multitudes more.^{1,2} Civil Rights era human relations organizations sprang up to address tensions between racial groups and to affect public policy in regards to equality and inclusion.²

Modern-day Human Relations/Human Rights Commissions (HRCs) are local agencies (primarily city-based with some at the county level) that are tasked with addressing issues of diversity and inequality in our communities.³ In California, HRCs are comprised of community volunteers who commit themselves to serving terms spanning a number of years. Commissioners' backgrounds, talents, and experiences vary widely; some are lawyers, some are college professors—others are entrepreneurs, social workers, schoolteachers, nurses, doctors, retired military professionals, and many others. The common trait among Human Relations commissioners is a passion for serving their community, a commitment to social justice and social change, and a general perspective that values diversity.

The California Department of Justice “authorizes and encourages...human relations commissions” which are charged with “preserv[ing] peace among citizens of different races, religions, and national origins.”⁴ HRCs can, for example, investigate conflicts between social groups in their communities, create and facilitate community

¹ Downey, Dennis J. (2009). “Institutional activism and community building: Human relations responses to 9/11 in Orange County, California. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 53(1), 99-113.

² Downey, Dennis J. (2017). “California Service-Learning/Human Relations Initiative.” *Draft Proposal*. 1-9.

³ This research project focuses specifically on city/regional Human Relations Commissions. Please note that there are many other organizations in California that are committed to issues of diversity and social justice.

⁴ State of CA Department of Justice. “Laws and Legislation. Civil Rights Laws.: Retrieved electronically from: <https://oag.ca.gov/civil/lawleg>.

forums on specific human rights issues, and advise law enforcement and public officials with information obtained from their communities.

California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO)

CAHRO is a non-profit organization, established in the 1970's, that seeks to create and maintain a viable Human Rights/Human Relations network throughout California. CAHRO exists to serve California's entire population of Human Relations/Human Rights organizations—with a particular focus on formal city and county commissions. Operating under the vision that there is enormous potential for promoting positive human relations and equal treatment for all within our diverse society, CAHRO works to strengthen the infrastructure of HRCs.⁵ Establishing and supporting local and regional networks of HRCs, promoting communication between these networks, and building HRC capacity by offering training, technical assistance, and sharing of information comprise CAHRO's mission.⁵ One of CAHRO's primary activities is to organize annual statewide conferences, and occasional regional convenings, to encourage networking among HRCs and the sharing of useful information.

A CAHRO study of HRCs conducted just under a decade ago identified several areas of "pressing human relations issues" in California communities.⁶ Loosely categorized under the broad term of discrimination, the top HRC-reported issues were: immigrant issues, youth and school issues, intergroup conflicts, and hate crimes/incidents. Also reported were LGBT issues, police-community conflicts, homelessness, drug and gang issues, and general issues related to inequality.⁶ Unfortunately, HRCs are often poorly funded—or not funded at all—which can render them virtually powerless to address these pressing concerns in their communities. Without the resources to adequately engage their communities in addressing these critical issues, HRCs often go dormant and societal problems can then become exacerbated by inattention.

⁵ California Association of Human Relations Organizations. "Our Mission." Retrieved Electronically from: www.cahro.org/about/.

⁶ Downey, Dennis J. (2010). "CAHRO 2009 Survey of CA HRCs: Final Report and Analyses." 1-8.

CAHRO envisions an active network of human rights organizations and commissions that are thriving in local communities. Rather than reacting to incidents piecemeal as they occur, CAHRO seeks to enliven and support a pro-active network that can educate and foster dialogue to create a climate of acceptance and inter-group action within local communities—where diversity is celebrated and root causes of discrimination and hate are addressed. This is a tall order and requires not only resources, but understandings of best practices and intention on the part of governments, public and private organizations, businesses, and individual citizens. A solid, well-connected, and active network is crucial in a climate where solutions to the root causes of inequality all too often face opposition by institutions and leaders who possess the power and resources to keep existing discriminatory structures in place.

Many HRCs (especially the majority with little to no funding) are in need of various types of resources that will allow them to implement their programs and further develop their ideas. As funding for HRCs is dependent upon county and city budget allocations, HRCs must seek creative ways to engage available human resources in their communities. HRC projects such as community forums, community celebration events, and research on the needs of marginalized populations require staff to implement, and adequate staffing is scarce at these largely under-funded agencies. Commissioners can enter their term of service with enthusiasm and a vision for implementing solutions only to reach a road-block of inadequate support in the way of personnel to assist in carrying those ideas to fruition.

One significant proposal intended to address the HRC's need for human resources is the California Human Relations/Service-Learning Initiative—a partnership between HRCs and CSU campuses that stands to equally benefit HRCs, CSU students, and California communities. CSU service-learning programs enable students to engage in their communities by partnering with local organizations and agencies. These formal service-learning programs are coordinated by the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) located on each CSU campus.

CSU Centers for Community Engagement and Service-Learning

The California State University system comprises 23 campuses across southern, central, and northern California and is the largest 4-year higher-education system in the United States.⁷ The CSU is deeply committed to student success and champions community engagement, multiculturalism, and inter-disciplinary learning.⁸ CSU students are typically first-generation college students and largely represent underserved, underrepresented, and low-income communities.⁹

Each CSU campus houses a center specifically dedicated to community engagement. Across the CSU system, these centers are collectively referred to as Centers for Community Engagement (CCEs) and are “commit[ted] to serving the economic, public policy and social needs” of the state of California as a whole.⁹ Approaching their 20-year anniversary of establishment, campus CCEs provide the infrastructure within which faculty, students, and community partners forge partnerships of mutual benefit.¹⁰

The method of community engagement utilized by CSU CCEs is specifically referred to as “service-learning”—a proven High Impact Practice (HIP) in higher education promoted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. This HIP is widely used throughout higher education and is recognized as a key element in developing a student’s sense of purpose—a “key character strength” that manifests as “a stable intention to accomplish something that is both personally meaningful and of contribution to the world.”¹¹ Simply stated, service-learning is a method of instruction that combines course-content with community service.⁹ Barbara Jacoby’s (1996) seminal research on service-learning defines the practice as “a form of experiential education” whereby “students engage in activities that address human and community

⁷ Douglass, J.A. (2004). “The Dynamics of Massification and Differentiation: A Comparative Look at Higher Education Systems in the United Kingdom and California.” *Higher Education Management and Policy*. 16(3). 19.

⁸ California State University. Retrieved Electronically from: <https://www2.calstate.edu/>.

⁹ Downey, Dennis J. (2017). “California Service-Learning/Human Relations Initiative.” *Draft Proposal*. 1-9.

¹⁰ California State University. Center for Community Engagement. Retrieved Electronically from: http://www.calstate.edu/cce/about_us/.

¹¹ John Templeton Foundation. (2014-2017). Retrieved Electronically from: <https://www.templeton.org/grant/how-service-learning-influences-youth-purpose-around-the-world>.

needs together with structured opportunities for reflection.”¹² It is crucial to stress the importance of designing service-learning courses with specific educational outcomes in mind; this coupled with the component of student reflection are what distinguish service-learning from volunteering or community service in the traditional sense.¹³ Service-learning is a pathway for students to take knowledge learned in the classroom and translate those largely abstract concepts into real-world work in their communities.¹³ This deepened learning experience for the student also provides much-needed community benefits by the service performed.¹⁴

Service-learning is built upon partnerships between the university and community—or, more specifically, between university classes and partner organizations in the community. Community partners are typically non-profit organizations or government agencies, and each community partner works closely with CSU faculty to develop service-learning projects that are designed to provide students real-world experience in the community while building each student’s social consciousness and leadership skills.¹⁵ CCEs represent a valuable resource for their community partners and local communities—offering an infusion of engaged and motivated students to assist in building and carrying out a wide variety of programs and projects.¹⁶ CCEs serve as the link between local CSU campuses and their surrounding communities with the express intention of benefiting the whole of society.¹⁴

George Kuh has identified four areas of Essential Learning Outcomes and connects them to HIPs that his research shows will better prepare students for our challenging and competitive job market:

- Fostering Broad Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World
- Strengthening Intellectual and Practical Skills
- Deepening Personal and Social Responsibility
- Practicing Integrative and Applied Learning¹⁷

¹² Jacoby, Barbara. (1996). *Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 3-22.

¹³ Downey, Dennis J. (2017). “California Service-Learning/Human Relations Initiative.” *Draft Proposal*. 1-9.

¹⁴ Downey, Dennis J. (2010). “CAHRO 2009 Survey of CA HRCs: Final Report and Analyses.” 1-8.

¹⁵ California State University Channel Islands. Community Partner Resources. Retrieved electronically from: <http://www.csuci.edu/servicelearning/communitypartners.htm>.

¹⁶ A concurrent study is underway to research the level of interest of CSU CCEs to partner with their local HRCs.

¹⁷ Kuh, George D. (2008). “High-Impact Educational Practices.” Washington, D.C. Association of American Colleges and Universities. pp. 14, 16, 21, 20, 27.

Kuh connects “Service and community-based learning”—a HIP—to two of these Essential Learning Outcomes: Deepening Personal and Social Responsibility and Practicing Integrative and Applied Learning.¹⁸ On service-learning, Kuh concludes that “working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.”¹⁸

California Human Relations/Service-Learning Initiative: a CCE / HRC Partnership

The core mission of the CSU system as a whole is built upon the foundational ideal of students and communities working together for mutual benefit. The hands-on, real-world experience of promoting diversity and awareness of inequality that HRCs can offer students is a perfect educational match. In fact, Kuh defines another High-Impact Practice—“Diversity, civic, and global learning”—and connects this practice to two of the above Essential Learning Outcomes: “Fostering Broad Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World” and “Deepening Personal and Social Responsibility.”¹⁸ Kuh encourages students to explore “difficult differences” and gives “racial, ethnic, and gender inequality” as examples—topics which HRCs are certainly dealing with daily in their communities.¹⁸

The experiences and needs of CSU students are particularly suited to working with HRCs who exist to serve all marginalized populations and groups as well as to celebrate diversity in all its many forms. As stated above, CSU campuses are generally populated with minority students from underserved communities. The benefits of offering students service-learning opportunities in the field of human relations is further underscored by another of Kuh’s points: “historically underserved students tend to benefit more from engaging in educationally purposeful activities [HIPs] than majority students.”¹⁸

CAHRO and the HRCs it serves can add tremendous value to CSU CCEs and assist students in becoming civically engaged while building students’ awareness of the basic goals and values of human relations practices. Additionally, students engaged in service-learning will provide much-needed human resources and skills to HRCs in their important work on behalf of all California citizens. The California Human

¹⁸ Kuh, George D. (2008). “High-Impact Educational Practices.” Washington, D.C. Association of American Colleges and Universities. pp. 14, 16, 21, 20, 27.

Relations/Service Learning Initiative also matches CAHRO's mission goals for invigorating human relations activities and networking opportunities throughout the state.

2. Research Design: Data & Methods

This research project was designed with two purposes in mind. The first was to provide the non-profit California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO), our community partner on this project, relevant information regarding the needs and capacities of the Human Relations Commissions (HRCs) they serve as well as determine HRC interest in specific CAHRO initiatives.

The second purpose was to ascertain the level of interest, willingness, and ability/capacity of California HRCs to partner with California State University (CSU) students on service-learning projects facilitated through CSU campus Centers for Community Engagement (CCEs).

The researcher, Kim McDonald, is an undergraduate student at California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI). This research project was designed and conducted by the researcher in partnership with Ann Noel, Esq., President of CAHRO, and the CSUCI CCE Faculty Director Dennis Downey (also serving as Faculty Supervisor on this research project).

Sampling Strategy

Fifty-two HRCs around the state of California were initially identified from a comprehensive list provided by CAHRO. Of those 52 HRCs, 43 were identified by the researcher as at least minimally active and engaged in their communities. Active HRCs were determined by locating the HRC's online presence and finding recent meeting agendas and meeting minutes. An HRC's level of community engagement was ascertained by reading recent meeting agendas and minutes as well as studying the HRC's online presence which in many cases highlighted current community issues and activities the HRC was engaged in. These 43 HRCs made up the sampling population for this research project.

Research Instrument – Survey Design Rationale and Implementation

CAHRO was consulted on the information they wished to obtain from each HRC, and the CSUCI CCE was consulted on the types of information that would best determine each HRC's willingness and capacity to partner with CSU CCEs. After combining the needs of both CAHRO and the CSUCI CCEs, the researcher decided to utilize a survey as the research instrument. (The survey instrument and the informed consent email are reproduced in Appendix A). Although structured interviews were initially discussed as a possible means to obtain the desired data, the population size and time constraints inherent in this one-semester capstone project led to the researcher's decision to utilize the online service *SurveyMonkey* to administer the survey.

Determining Needs and Capacities: In line with CAHRO's mission to strengthen the infrastructure of California HRCs, the survey requested information on each HRC's budget and staff to determine basic capacity. CAHRO also inquired about community human relations issues, the current focus of each HRCs work in their community, and whether the HRC would welcome support for each delineated issue in order to better position themselves to design and implement the most relevant support.

CAHRO Initiatives: Consistent with its efforts to connect, invigorate, and encourage HRCs to look to one another for support and strength, CAHRO is leading an effort to develop a statewide Bias Free Network. In addition, CAHRO is considering the publication of an annual or semi-annual human relations bulletin which would be a source of information and support for HRCs. Specific questions were asked in regards to each HRC's capacity to respond to hate crimes and their interest in joining a Bias Free Network. HRCs were also asked to report their level of interest in receiving and/or participating in a Human Relations bulletin as well as choosing the types of topics that would be of greatest interest and utility.

Another CAHRO initiative seeks to involve HRCs in a CSU CCE service-learning partnership. The California Human Relations Service-Learning Initiative has the potential to strengthen HRC capacities and provide valuable learning opportunities to CSU students. HRCs were asked questions designed to assess their level of interest and potential need for CSU service-learners. Information on service-learning as a high-

impact educational practice was provided along with potential benefits for the HRC. Each HRC was asked if they had past experience working with college students and had the option of rating that experience. Finally, each HRC was asked to rate their level of interest in exploring the possibility of a service-learning partnership with their local CSU campus.

Survey Implementation: Contact information for each of the 43 HRCs was obtained from data publicly available on each HRC website as well as from CAHRO. In some instances, contacts at certain HRCs were contacted via email in an attempt to ascertain the correct contact person to complete the survey. An email containing the Informed Consent information and a link to the survey was sent to each of the 43 HRCs. After two weeks, a reminder email was sent to those HRCs that had not yet completed the survey. Four weeks after the initial request, CAHRO President Ann Noel and members of the CAHRO board of directors contacted individual HRC commissioners that had not yet responded to the survey. Survey responses increased considerably as a result of these efforts by CAHRO's board of directors.

During the survey invitation process, two intended respondents expressed reservations in responding to the survey and did not participate. One of these intended respondents cited the California Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act which prohibits members and commissioners of public agencies from meeting together on public business—including in email and online—outside of a public arena.¹⁹ The other intended respondent who chose not to participate felt the survey should be discussed at their HRCs regular meeting which was not feasible due to the time-constraints inherent in this research project.

Some respondents were Staff Liaisons between the commission and the City Council. Other respondents were commissioners—of which several were Chair or Vice-Chair of their commission. At least one HRC representative asked that their individual responses not be publicly attributed to their HRC. For these reasons, the researcher has made every effort to ensure that individual HRCs are not named in this report. All respondents provided contact information for follow-up by CAHRO or CSU

¹⁹ California Research Bureau. (2013). "Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act: General guidelines." Open Government Series. California State Library. S-13-003.

representatives, and this information will be given only to those parties. Although respondents are frequently referred to as HRCs herein, survey answers contained in this report are not intended to represent the views and opinions of all commissioners serving on any given HRC.

Data Analysis

A total of 30 of the 43 intended respondents completed the survey resulting in a 70% response rate.²⁰ Two prospective respondents visited the survey online and did not choose to complete it (these are separate from the two potential respondents recorded in the above section); one began to complete the survey but was called away and reported not having time to complete it. This resulted in three incomplete survey responses. Ten prospective respondents did not visit the survey after several attempts to reach them. Although generalizations cannot be made based on these survey responses, the data gathered is important and valuable both to CAHRO as an organization and to the CSU CCEs as they seek to establish pilot HRC partnerships.

The researcher entered each piece of data from all 30 completed surveys into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and each question was analyzed individually by the researcher. Free-form responses were grouped together in a Microsoft Word document and analyzed individually. The tables and charts in this report were generated and designed in Microsoft Excel.

PART II: FINDINGS: HRCs NEEDS, CAPACITIES, & INTERESTS

3. Needs & Capacities

CAHRO desires to offer the most relevant support possible to HRCs, and determining the current needs and capacities of each HRC is vital in assisting CAHRO to realize their mission. In an attempt to paint the most accurate picture of what HRCs are facing—both internally and out in their communities—our survey asked several

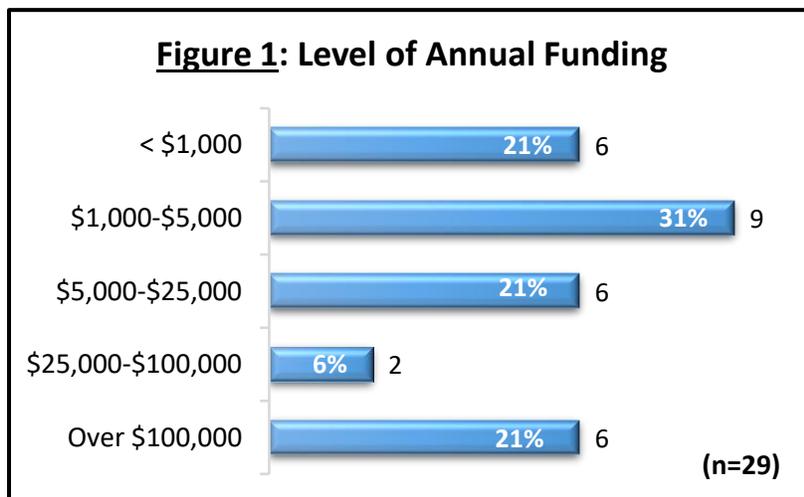
²⁰ Two of our 29 respondents are non-profit organizations that function as Human Relations Commissions in their city or county. They advise their City Council and otherwise function as HRCs in their communities. If this distinction between a public or private agency has been deemed important by the researcher, it will be noted correspondingly in Part II of this report.

questions intended to enable CAHRO to realistically provide HRCs with the support they vitally need. This section of our survey covered resources (annual funding and number of full-time equivalent employees), issues (populations served and community issue-areas), and questions regarding four specific activities that HRCs are typically involved in: 1) formal receipt of complaints and capacities or powers associated with complaint procedures, 2) sharing of specific information by law enforcement or criminal justice agencies, 3) utilization of restorative justice, and 4) organization of forums for citizen interaction on human relations matters.

HRC Resources

As with any agency or organization, both financial and human resources are essential to HRCs in carrying out intended programs and realizing the important goals set out in their mission statements. Information on the resources of HRCs were measured in two areas: level of annual funding and number of full-time-equivalent staff.

Level of annual funding (Figure 1): Just over half of respondents conduct their operations with \$5,000 or less per year in funding; just under one quarter reported



receiving less than \$1,000 annually and approximately one third receive annual funding between \$1,000-\$5,000. Twenty one percent receive funding between \$5,000-\$25,000 annually. Those with annual funding between \$25,000-\$100,000

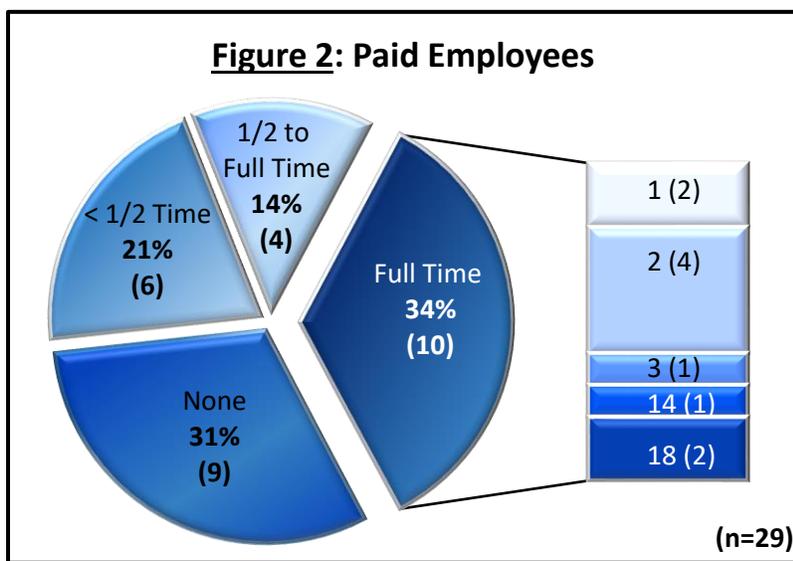
represent 6% of respondents while 21% of respondents are operating with a budget of over \$100,000 annually.²¹

²¹ The researcher would like to suggest that this survey's relatively high percentage of HRCs with annual funding over \$100,000 may fundamentally be a reflection of a well-funded HRCs capacity or resources to respond to a survey; i.e. an HRC with little or no funding and no staffing may not have the resources to respond whereas a well-funded and well-staffed HRCs does.

This information is invaluable for CAHRO and for CSU CCEs as they approach HRCs to implement the three initiatives laid out in this research project. Varying levels of initial involvement in these initiatives can be tailored to each HRCs level of available funding and, as we next explore, their number of available staff.

Staffing (Figure 2): Directly related to the level of annual funding, HRCs were asked to consider all of their paid staff together (if any) and record how many full-time equivalent positions those employees represented.

The majority of respondents (66%) indicated that their HRC operates with no paid employees or one part-time employee; nearly one third of all responding HRCs



have no paid assistance while another third have access to only one part-time employee.

Ten responding HRCs (34%) reported having one or more full time employee. The break-out of full-time employees in Figure 2 represents the number of employees (with the number

of reporting HRCs in parenthesis) thus: two HRCs reported having one full-time employee, four HRCs reported employing two people full-time, and one HRC reported having three full-time employees. Three HRCs employ over 10 people: one HRC has 14 paid, full-time employees while two HRCs have 18 people employed full-time. It is important to note that all three of these HRCs with more than 10 full time employees reported receiving annual funding over \$100,000.²²

²² The researcher would again like to suggest that this survey's relatively high percentage of HRCs with a number of full-time employees may fundamentally be a reflection of a well-funded HRCs capacity or resources to respond to a survey; i.e. an HRC with no employees or one part-time employee may not have the resources to respond whereas a well-funded and well-staffed HRCs does.

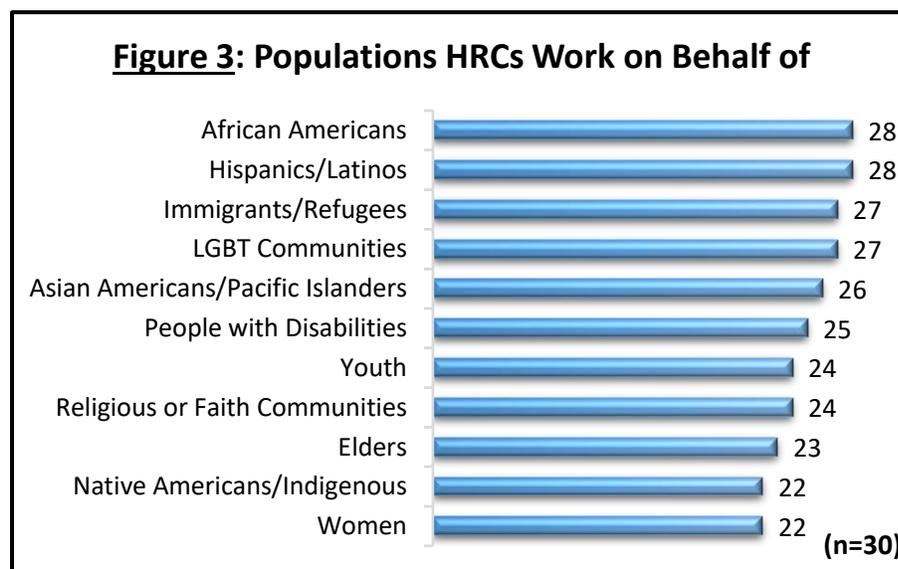
Human Relations Issues

California is the second-most racially and ethnically diverse state in the U.S.—second only to Hawaii in its racial and ethnic diversity.²³ HRCs exist to promote the positive societal effects of diversity and cultivate healthy attitudes among Californians towards their fellow citizens. To best support HRCs in developing relevant programs to benefit the groups and populations they serve, our survey asked two specific questions regarding the populations served and the issue-areas each HRC is focused on.

Populations served (Figure 3): Respondents were asked to indicate whether their HRC works with or on behalf of 11 traditionally marginalized or under-served populations; this list was partially compiled based on previous research. Respondents were given instructions to choose all that apply. Seventeen of the 30 responding HRCs (70%) marked all of these populations as those they work with or on behalf of:

- African Americans
- Hispanics/Latinos
- Asian Americans and/or Pacific Islanders
- Native Americans/Indigenous Peoples
- Immigrants and/or refugees
- Religious or faith communities
- People with disabilities
- Youth
- Elders
- LGBT Individuals
- Women

Considering California’s high level of racial and ethnic diversity, it is not surprising that



people of color and the issues they face are represented in the top five populations served by HRCs: All but four (93%) of the responding HRCs report working on behalf of African Americans and

²³ Kolmar, C. (2017). “These are the 10 most diverse states in America.” (March 5). Retrieved electronically from: <https://www.homesnacks.net/most-diverse-states-in-america-128573/>.

Hispanics/Latinos closely followed by immigrants as a group. Asian Americans and/or Pacific Islanders are also in the top five groups HRCs are working on behalf of.

Also in the top five groups/populations served by HRCs in California (see Figure 3, page 16) is the LGBT community: 90% of responding HRCs work with or on behalf of LGBT individuals. In fact, just as many California HRCs work with the LGBT community and the issues they face as work with immigrants. As California is home to over 10 million immigrants—more than twice the number of immigrants as live in the states of New York, Texas, or Florida—this finding speaks to the gravity of the issues the LGBT community faces.²⁴ Despite California’s reputation as a liberal and inclusive place for LGBT people, the state ranked number six in a recent tolerance study.²⁵ As the most populous state in the U.S., California mirrors the ideological divisions of our nation as a whole—with a pronounced urban/rural divide; Californians in urban areas tend to be more liberal/progressive while those in rural areas tend towards conservative views.²⁶ As such, there are cities in California that regularly rank among the top in the U.S. for their progressive policies towards LGBT individuals, however there are also California cities that rank among the lowest nationwide.²⁷

As part of this question, respondents were also asked to record any other groups or populations not delineated by the researcher. One respondent recorded “low income” as a group. Four respondents shared that their HRC works with any underprivileged group that requires assistance—one specifically noting groups that are “subjected to human rights, equity, and inclusion problems”; one of these four responses noted that their HRC works to make their county “an accepting community for everyone.” The work that HRCs carry out in their communities is vital in promoting tolerance and diversity towards all of these traditionally marginalized populations.

²⁴ Migration Policy Institute. (2011-2015) “U.S. Immigrant Population by State and County.” Retrieved electronically from: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-state-and-county>

²⁵ *Daily Beast*. (2011). “Ranking the most tolerant and least tolerant states.” (January 16). Retrieved electronically from: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/01/16/ranking-the-most-tolerant-and-least-tolerant-states>.

²⁶ Krimm, Daniel. McGhee, Eric. (2012) “California’s political geography.” (February). Retrieved electronically from: http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1007.

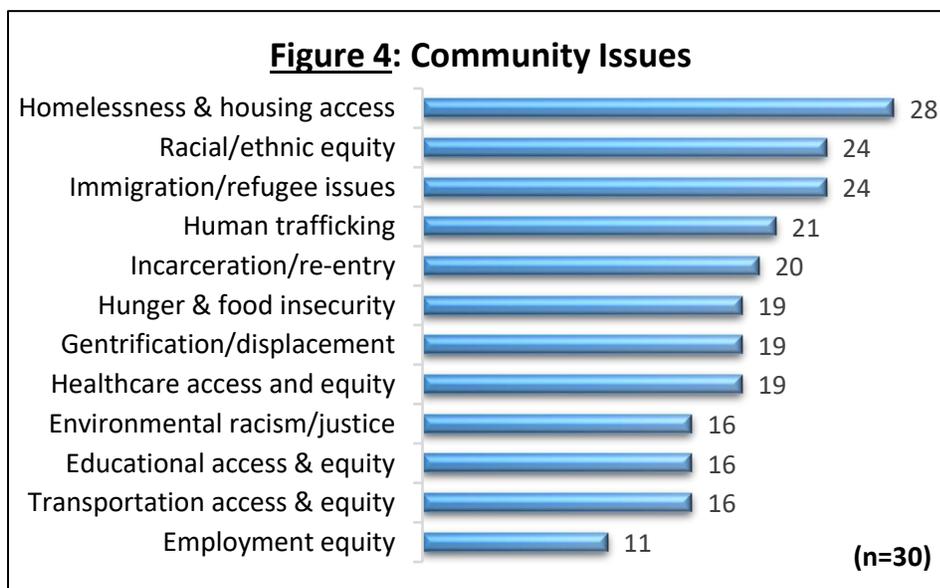
²⁷ McNary, Sharon. (2014). “These California cities scored best and worst for LGBT-friendly policies.” (November 12). Retrieved electronically from: <http://www.scpr.org/blogs/politics/2014/11/12/17555/these-california-cities-scored-best-and-worst-for>. Also see: Halloran, Liz. (2016). “Human Rights Campaign releases 5th annual Municipal equality index.” <http://www.hrc.org/blog/human-rights-campaign-releases-5th-annual-municipal-equality-index>.

Issue areas (Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7): Respondents were asked to choose among the following selection of issue areas and record whether each issue is: 1) a current issue affecting their community, 2) a current focus of their work, and 3) an area in which they would welcome assistance. This list was also compiled based on previous research on California HRCs, and respondents were asked to choose all that apply:

- Racial/ethnic equity
- Immigration and/or refugee resettlement
- Homelessness and housing access
- Neighborhood displacement/gentrification
- Transportation access and equity
- Incarceration/re-entry/recidivism
- Human trafficking
- Hunger and food insecurity
- Employment equity
- Environmental racism/justice
- Educational access and equity
- Healthcare access and equity

It is important for CAHRO to be aware of the major issues that California communities are facing. The information gained from this survey can be used to support HRCs in their efforts to confront these important issues.

As Figure 4 shows, homelessness and housing access ranks as the number one community issue—reported by all but two responding HRCs. Although homelessness is reportedly declining in the U.S. as a whole, homelessness in California is increasing—



and lack of affordable housing is seen as the main cause.²⁸

Echoing the results of the above inquiry on populations/groups, issues of racial/ethnic equity and the challenges

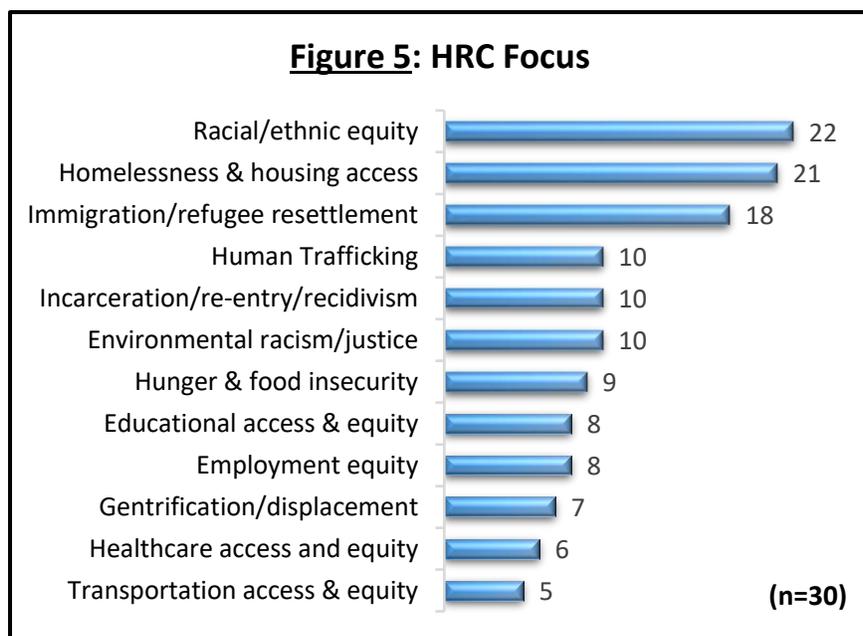
of immigration rank closely with homelessness as the most pressing community issues that California communities are currently grappling with.

²⁸ Rubenstein, S., Lyons, J., and Fagan, K. (2016). "Homelessness drops across nation, but California count rises." (November 17) Retrieved electronically from SFGate: <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Homelessness-drops-across-nation-except-in-10621643.php>.

Well over half of responding HRCs reported human trafficking as a pressing community issue (see Figure 4, page 18). Human trafficking is a large and growing problem around the world—a multi-billion dollar industry, and California is far from immune to this debilitating and horrifying crime of “modern day slavery.”²⁹ California must not only work within its own borders, with other states, and with the federal government on this issue, it must work with other nations as well to combat these “sex rings” that particularly target “young women and girls.”²⁹

Rounding out the top five community issues is incarceration/re-entry/recidivism; 67% (20) of responding HRCs report this as an issue in their community. California has made progress in recent years towards addressing its decades-long prison overpopulation issues and is making efforts to implement alternatives to mass incarceration, however prisons are still over-crowded and funding for rehabilitation continues to be threatened.³⁰ One alternative to incarceration is Restorative Justice, which will be discussed later in this report (see page 24 at bottom).

HRCs were also asked to record which of the above issue areas are a current

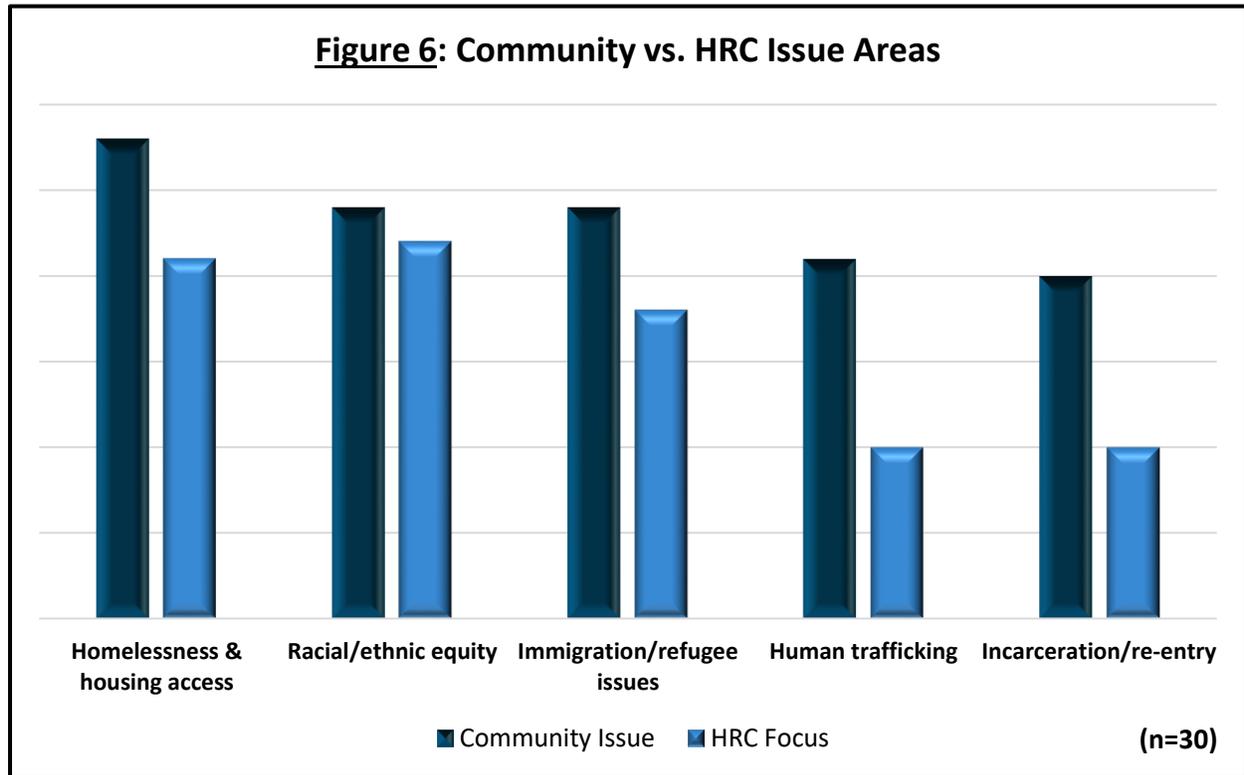


focus of their work (Figure 5). Not surprisingly, the top five community issues are also the top five areas of HRC focus: racial/ethnic equity, homelessness and housing access, immigration, human trafficking, and issues related to incarceration.

²⁹ State of California Department of Justice. “Human Trafficking.” Retrieved electronically from: <https://oag.ca.gov/human-trafficking>.

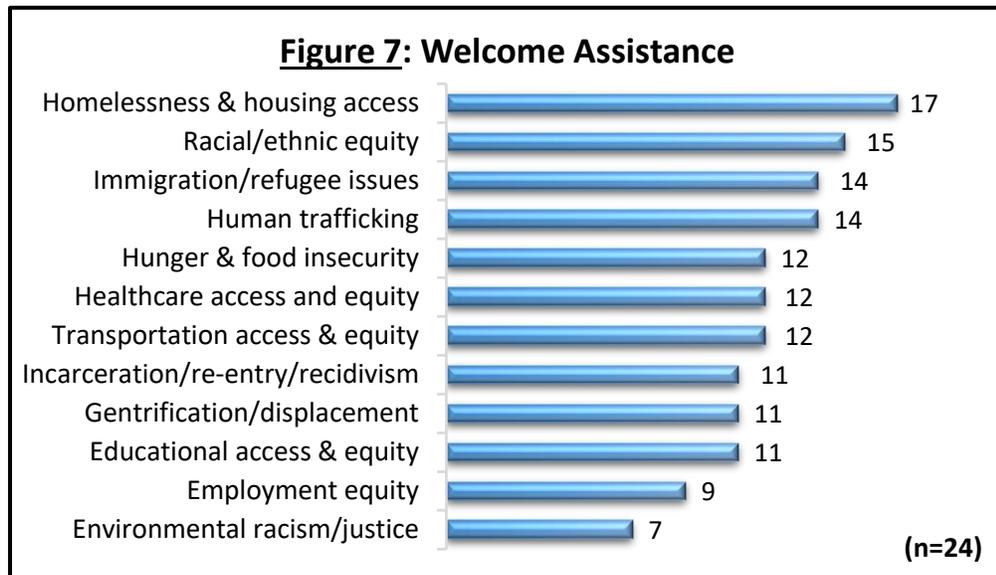
³⁰ Bachrach, E. and Sexton, J. (2016). “The end of mass incarceration in California: What comes next?” (August 30). Retrieved electronically from Boom California: <https://boomcalifornia.com/2016/08/30/the-end-of-mass-incarceration-in-california/>.

There is a notable difference between the above two measures of Community Issues and HRC Focus. As Figure 6 shows, there is some discrepancy between the top five community issues and the number of HRCs reporting that their work is focused on these issues.



As this comparison of Figures 4 and 5 reveals, the fact that an HRC reported an issue as currently affecting their community does not mean it is necessarily a current focus of their work. Figure 6 above shows the top five issue areas alongside the top five areas of HRC focus. This variation can partly be explained by the work of other government agencies tasked to address these issues such as social service agencies, immigration assistance agencies, and criminal justice agencies. Another possible explanation is based on this survey’s findings on HRC funding and number of paid employees; most HRCs lack the fundamental resources to meaningfully impact these important community issues. The question as to which issue areas HRCs would welcome assistance is particularly important in this regard.

Figure 7 below shows the issue areas for which HRCs would welcome assistance.³¹ Of the 24 HRCs who are welcoming of assistance, approximately three quarters are in need of assistance related to homelessness and housing access.



Openness to support for issues of racial/ethnic equity closely followed with just over two thirds of respondents recording this issue.

Assistance with immigration and battling human trafficking is equally welcomed by just over half of respondents. Exactly half of responding HRCs are open to assistance with hunger, healthcare access, and transportation access while just under half welcome assistance with issues related to incarceration, neighborhood displacement/ gentrification, and educational access and equity. Fewer respondents are in need of support for the areas of employment equity and environmental racism.

Although it is not CAHRO’s mission to support HRCs with funding, CAHRO can offer such important support as planning and structuring of relevant regional conferences, developing and implementing training programs, and creating invaluable networking opportunities. With this knowledge of issue areas for which HRCs would welcome assistance, CAHRO can provide HRCs with relevant support that matches the areas within which they are currently working or would like to make more of an impact.

As an additional part of this question on issue areas, respondents were asked if there were any other issues in their community that are central to the work of their HRC. Thirteen respondents recorded additional issues or made additional comments.

³¹ A small percentage of HRCs did not respond to welcoming assistance in any of the 12 issue areas: (20% or 6 HRCs).

Three HRC's noted LGBTQ and LGBTQI civil rights as a specific area of HRC focus. These respondents also reported working with or on behalf of LGBT communities in the section above regarding groups/populations (see Figure 3, page 16).

One HRC recorded that although homelessness and food insecurity are issues in their community, those issues are not a focus of their HRC because these issues are addressed by their social services commission. Another respondent noted that their HRC currently works to ensure access to social services in their community.

An HRC that recorded homelessness and housing access as an issue in their community, a focus of their work, and an area that they would welcome assistance detailed this issue further as a need for: "affordable housing, transitional housing, and mental health services." Other reported areas of specific HRC efforts (with number of HRCs reporting the same community issue in parenthesis) are:

- Criminal justice equity: Police accountability/civilian review and control, use of force, racial profiling, crowd control policies, prison realignment (3)
- Community/Law Enforcement Relations (3)
- Hate crimes/hate incidents—prevention and response (2)
- Youth Empowerment and leadership development (2)
- Community Building
- Dispute Resolution
- Domestic violence
- Elder abuse
- Interfaith collaboration
- People with disabilities, equity
- Restorative Justice
- Wage theft
- Women's and girl's rights and justice

One HRC noted that their efforts also focus on "international peace with justice, nuclear weapons and power, open governance, and socially responsible investing."

Another HRC detailed a specific issue facing their city:

"Rising rents, investors from outside the city and a dated rent stabilization ordinance created a perfect storm for tenants. Many older adults who spent their lives renting in the City were being forced out by unscrupulous landlords with no place to go. Approximately 65% of residents...are renters. The City recently passed a strict rent stabilization ordinance that reduced allowable rent increases from an annual maximum of 10% to just 3% annually. Also, any tenant receiving a no-cause termination notice now receives relocation fees."

This data collected on populations and issues—especially where HRCs reported they would welcome assistance—provide CAHRO with invaluable information that can be translated into concrete programs to the benefit of traditionally underserved and marginalized groups in California.

Human Relations Activities

CAHRO develops and sponsors training programs for California agencies and organizations working to advance civil and human rights.³² Offering the most relevant programs requires knowledge of the types of activities HRCs are currently involved in and have the capacity to implement. In an effort to learn more about particular activities, abilities, and capacities of California HRCs and to learn about each HRC's needs in these specific areas, respondents were asked four specific questions regarding their activities: 1) does the HRC formally receive complaints from the community about human relations issues, 2) do law enforcement or criminal justice agencies currently share specific information on community issues with the HRC, 3) is the HRC currently utilizing Restorative Justice in their work, and 4) has the HRC organized forums for citizens to interact and engage on human relations matters.

Formally receive complaints? When asked if their commission formally receives complaints from their community about human relations issues, three quarters of responding HRCs (22) responded yes. Those who answered yes were asked if they have any formal capacities or powers associated with these complaint procedures: responses were almost evenly split with a little over half of those HRCs who formally receive complaints having any formal capacity to respond to or address the issue. Further, all respondents who reported having formal capacities or powers related to receipt of complaints were asked to describe those powers and procedures or to comment generally on the process of receiving complaints.

Thirteen HRCs chose to record a free-form response regarding their complaint procedures. Seven reported that their task is to share concerns, make recommendations, or otherwise advise their City Council on human relations/rights

³² California Association of Human Relations Organizations. "What we do." Retrieved electronically from: www.cahro.org/about/what-we-do/.

complaints from their communities—two of these seven additionally have the power to advise/give direction to or otherwise respond to the person(s) filing the complaint. Three HRCs reported that they have been charged with investigation, offering findings, and/or facilitating mediation with regards to human relations/rights complaints. One HRC reported having the power to recommend legislation designed to improve human relations and to support all county departments in addressing human relations problems.

Another HRC receives complaints specifically regarding their city police department; this HRC then works with their Chief of Police to solve the complaint and tracks the complaint to resolution. Finally, one HRC explained that although they have no official, formal powers with regards to complaints, they “have some influence regarding complaint procedures.” This HRC offered the example of working with police and sheriff’s departments on improving “complaint/compliment procedures.” In addition, this HRC encourages its citizens who feel they have been “mistreated by the police” to file official complaints with law enforcement.

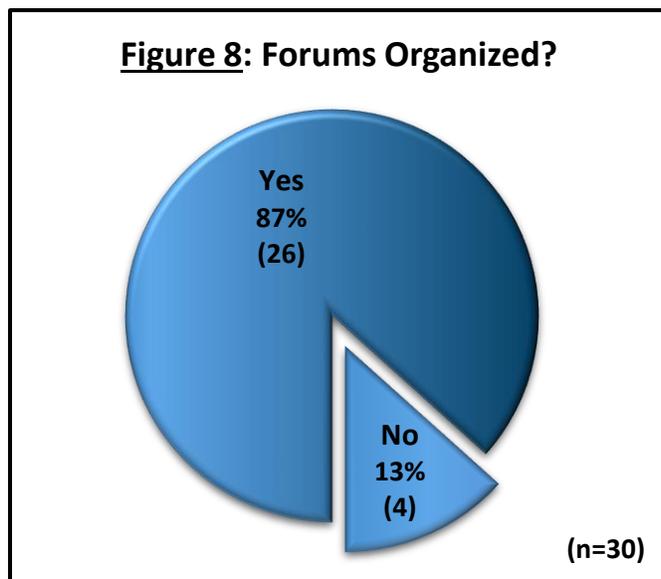
Shared information from law enforcement? Respondents were asked if their city or county law enforcement or criminal justice agencies currently share specific information on community issues with their HRC—such as hate crimes or hate incidents. A yes answer was recorded by two thirds of respondents. The one third of respondents who answered no were asked if they would find that information useful; all but one respondent (who skipped this question) answered yes indicating that shared information from law enforcement would be useful.

The results of this question underscore the importance of communication between government agencies and departments. Our survey did not ask respondents to report why information on community issues is not shared by law enforcement or criminal justice agencies. For future research, follow-up questions could be asked of these 11 HRCs to determine what the barriers to information sharing are, and recommendations could be considered to remedy lack of communication.

Restorative Justice: CAHRO conducts regional conferences around California on many topics related to human relations/rights. A major recent focus of CAHRO’s work is educating community leaders on Restorative Justice practices as an alternative

to school suspension, incarceration, and other punishments.^{33,34} Respondents were asked if their HRC—or another agency in their community—is currently utilizing Restorative Justice in any of their work. Of the 29 HRCs who responded to this question, 55% (16) are utilizing Restorative Justice. This information is helpful to CAHRO as they can now approach HRCs who are not using Restorative Justice in their communities and offer information, education, and training. CAHRO can also offer further support to those HRCs currently utilizing Restorative Justice and disperse information gathered from successful programs to network HRCs together specifically surrounding this topic.

Community forums? (Figure 8): Community forums are an important way for citizens' voices to be heard and for information on potential solutions to be shared. Forums also provide a way for issues to be aired in the media as the media has the potential to heighten awareness of problems facing marginalized groups whose issues are largely invisible within a majority-focused society.³⁵



When asked if their HRC has organized a forum for citizens to interact and engage on human relations matters in their community, a great majority responded yes. Of those HRCs who responded yes, 25 recorded what topics they have addressed in recent forums via a free-form comment box. Those comments are listed below in order of the number of times the topic was

³³ CAHRO. (2013). Overcoming violence and injustice conference: Restorative justice panel.

<<http://www.cahro.org/2013/04/overcoming-violence-injustice-conference-restorative-justice-panel/>>

³⁴ For more information on Restorative Justice, please read: *Balanced and Restorative Justice: An information manual for California*. (2006). Judicial Council of California.

³⁵ United States Department of Justice Community Relations Service. (2003). "Guidelines for effective human relations commissions." Retrieved electronically from: <https://www.justice.gov/archive/crs/pubs/gehrc.htm>.

mentioned (in parenthesis). Where respondents shared specific focuses under a general heading, those are listed here as well:

- Hate crimes & incidents (8) – 1: anti-Semitic graffiti, 1: bullying, 1: internet bullying and hate, 1: domestic violence
- Community/police relations (7) – 2: police brutality/use of force
- Racial and ethnic equity/justice (7) – 1: Afghan community, 1: Muslims in America, 1: indigenous rights, 1: implicit bias
- Homelessness (6) – 1: veterans homelessness, 1: homeless camps
- Immigrant rights & resettlement (6) – 1: refugee concerns, 1: documented status, 1: deportation (post-Trump election)
- Human trafficking/sex trafficking (5)
- Housing displacement (gentrification)/affordable housing, rental discrimination against families, tenant/landlord conflict (5)
- General listening sessions/information gathering (3) 1: “assuring all have a ‘voice’ in the community”
- Youth engagement (3) – 1: understanding and preventing youth violence
- LGBTQ (3) – 1: transgender issues, 1: Pride Parade community participation
- Cultural diversity/diversity in general (3)
- Education equity/access (2)
- Restorative justice (2)
- Inmate and family concerns (2) – 1: prison realignment

Other topics, mentioned only once, include:

- drug use and cannabis related issues
- employment
- health care
- income inequality
- interfaith awareness
- people with disabilities
- resistance to unwanted development (NIMBY syndrome: Not in My Backyard)
- senior/elder issues
- sexual abuse

Several HRCs reported conducting these general information sessions:

- Annual “Excellence in Human Relations” awards event
- Annual Interfaith event (co-sponsor)
- Impact of the Patriot Act
- Know Your Rights
- When World Events Hit Home: Strategies for Community Healing, Hope and Awareness
- Volunteerism: “Make a Difference” campaign

One HRC reported that although they have conducted community forums in the past, they do not currently have the “manpower” to conduct these forums. Two HRCs reported they consider their monthly/bi-monthly HRC meetings a community forum and post their future meeting agendas online to encourage community involvement and comment.

The topics of these community forums conducted by HRCs in California provide important insight to CAHRO as to pressing human relations/rights issues. With this information, relevant types of support can be designed to assist more HRCs to conduct these important means of communication and strengthen the value of diversity within California communities.

4. Interests

CAHRO Initiatives

To further develop a functioning and vibrant network of HRCs and encourage collaborative social action, CAHRO is looking to implement three specific initiatives. One is the development of a “Bias-Free” network in California; another is the creation and distribution of a periodic bulletin to be distributed among human relations organizations around the state, and another is the California Human Relations/Service-Learning Initiative—a partnership between HRCs and CSU campuses.

Bias-Free Network (Figures 9, 10, 11, and 12): More than any other crime, hate crimes—also referred to as bias-motivated crimes—hold the potential to destabilize communities both socially and economically.³⁶ The U.S. Department of Justice refers to hate crimes as “the violence of intolerance and bigotry.”³⁶ Any crime motivated by “bias against an individual’s or a group’s race, religion, ethnic/national origin, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation” is considered a hate crime; perpetrators are subject to harsher punishment for targeting these “core characteristics of [a person’s] identity.”³⁷

Hate incidents—or bias-motivated incidents—differ from hate crimes not in their

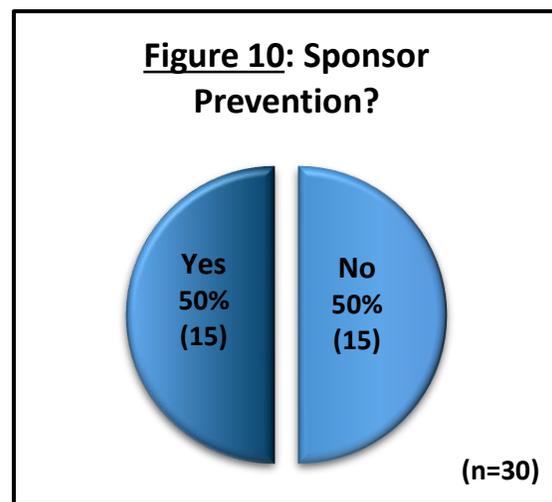
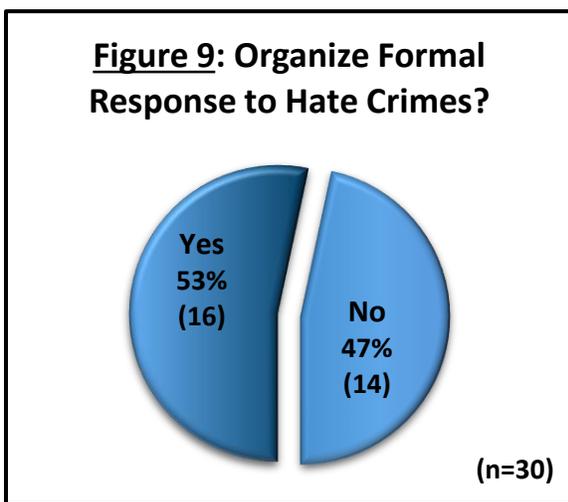
³⁶ United States Department of Justice Community Relations Service. (2001). “Hate crime: The violence of intolerance.” Retrieved electronically from: https://www.justice.gov/archive/crs/pubs/crs_pub_hate_crime_bulletin_1201.htm.

³⁷ International Association of Chiefs of Police. (n.d.) “Responding to Hate Crimes: A Police Officer’s Guide to Investigation and Prevention. Retrieved electronically from: <http://www.theiacp.org/ViewResult?SearchID=123>.

motivation but in their level of legal criminality.³⁸ Hate incidents—although not punishable by law—are taken very seriously by law enforcement as they can often “escalate and prompt retaliatory action” as well as fuel “communitywide unrest.”³⁸

The number of hate crimes in California has increased for the last two consecutive years—by 10.4% in 2015 and by 14.2% in 2016, and troubling signs point to increasing acceleration; the presence of hate groups in our state is on the rise as well.³⁹ CAHRO is committed to supporting HRCs to respond to and prevent hate crimes and hate incidences in their communities. As one aspect of this commitment, CAHRO is actively seeking funding to develop and implement a “Bias-Free” network that will promote effective prevention and response to both hate crimes and hate incidents.

Survey respondents were asked three questions related to the Bias-Free network initiative: 1) does the HRC organize any sort of formal *response* to hate crimes and hate incidents, 2) does the HRC sponsor any type of program or activity to *prevent* hate crimes and hate incidents, 3) rating of HRC interest in participating in CAHRO’s Bias-Free Network.



In answer to the first question as to whether the HRC organizes any formal response to hate crimes and hate incidents in their community, just over half responded yes (Figure 9). Asked if their HRC sponsors any type of program or activity (Figure 10)

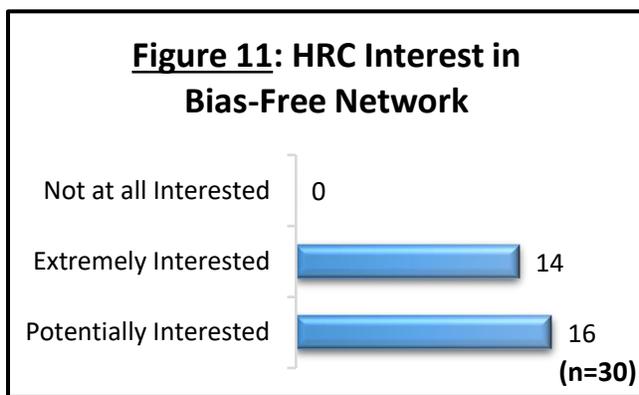
³⁸ International Association of Chiefs of Police. (n.d.) “Responding to Hate Crimes: A Police Officer’s Guide to Investigation and Prevention. <<http://www.theiacp.org/ViewResult?SearchID=123>>.

³⁹ Levin, B. (2017). “Hate and Extremism in California.” Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism; California State University, San Bernardino. p. 7

to prevent hate crimes and/or hate incidents, respondents were evenly split; half of responding HRCs sponsor these types of programs/activities while the other half do not.

Considering the commitment of HRCs—as outlined previously—to racial and ethnic equity, immigrant rights, LGBTQI issues, etc., it cannot be lack of commitment or interest on the part of HRCs that deters their current involvement in formal hate crime response and prevention. As the following two survey questions reveal, HRCs are interested in aligning with efforts to prevent hate crimes and hate incidents (see Figure 11 below) and cite needs for funding, training, and staffing (see discussion of Figure 12 below) to enable them to better respond to and prevent these crimes and incidents.

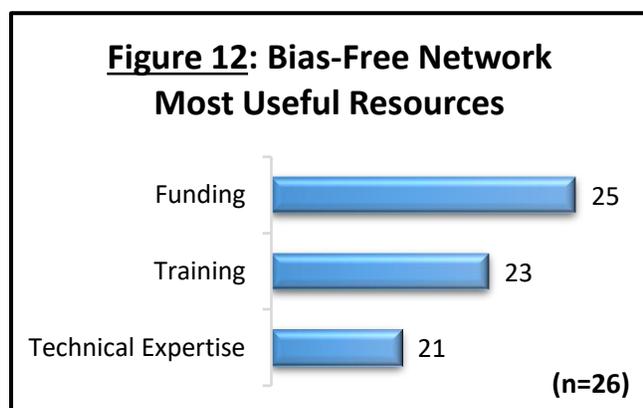
Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of interest in participating in a regional and statewide bias-free network with available responses of: a) extremely interested, b) potentially interested, and c) not at all interested.



All respondents reported interest in participating in the Bias-Free network (Figure 11): 53% are potentially interested and 47% are extremely interested. Those who expressed a level of interest (which was all respondents) were asked if technical expertise, funding, or training would be

useful resources in helping them to organize a Bias-Free network in their region. Respondents were asked to choose all that apply.

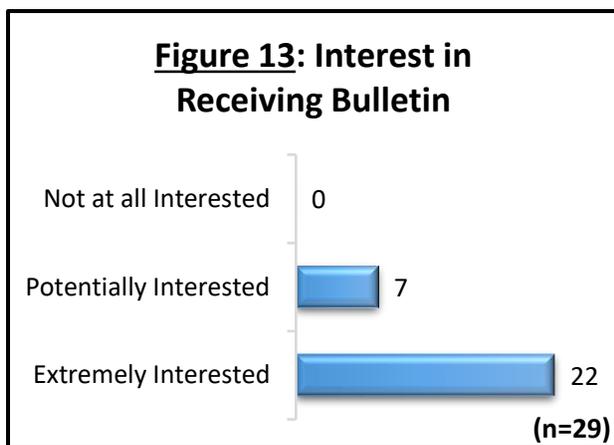
Of the three resources, funding was the most frequently reported followed by training and lastly, technical expertise (see Figure 12). One potentially interested respondent skipped this question and three respondents did not choose any of the three options—instead writing in a response that specifically requested more information on the Bias-Free network.



Another potentially interested respondent who marked funding as the most useful resource commented on this question, “we have almost zero staffing—less than 1/4 of a person's time,” which underscores the need for an organized and well-funded support network not only for this CAHRO initiative, but for HRCs in general.

Human Relations Bulletin (Figures 13, 14, and 15): Another CAHRO initiative is the creation and distribution of an annual or semiannual Human Relations bulletin which would include a wide range of information relevant to human relations around the state. This initiative is intended to strengthen a statewide network of HRCs that can effectively educate, advocate, and promote progress on human relations issues.

Prior to commenting on specific bulletin-content, respondents were asked to rate their level of interest in receiving such a bulletin by choosing a) extremely interested, b) potentially interested, or c) not at all interested.

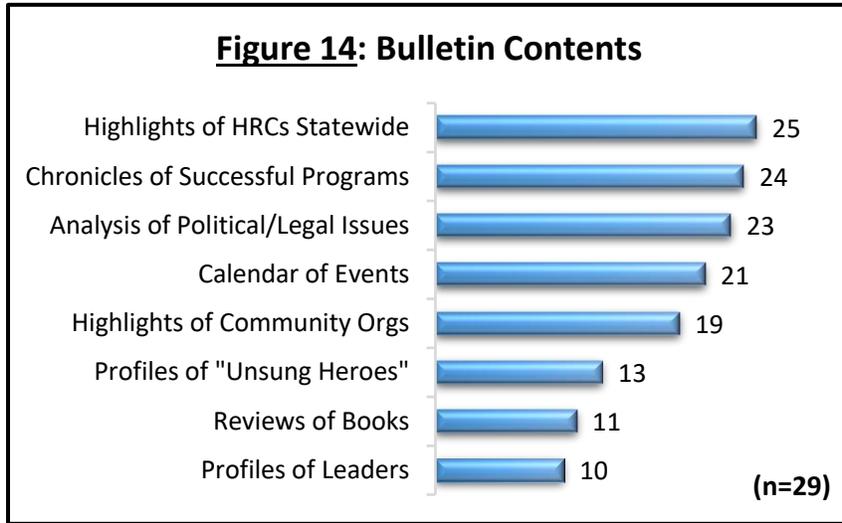


As with the Bias-Free network, all respondents expressed interest in receiving a Human Relations bulletin from CAHRO (see Figure 13): three quarters of responding HRCs expressed extreme interest with the remainder expressing potential interest. No respondents chose the “Not at all interested” option. This response is a

very positive one for CAHRO as it represents a desire on behalf of all responding HRCs for networking and communication. Those HRCs who expressed a level of interest in the bulletin were asked to choose from this list of bulletin contents that would be of greatest interest and utility to their work:

- Calendar of statewide human relations events
- Chronicles of successful human relations programs or activities
- Profiles of leaders in human relations
- Profiles of “unsung heroes” in human relations
- Highlights of human relations commissions
- Highlights of community organizations
- Reviews of books relevant to human relations
- Analyses of political or legal issues relevant to human relations

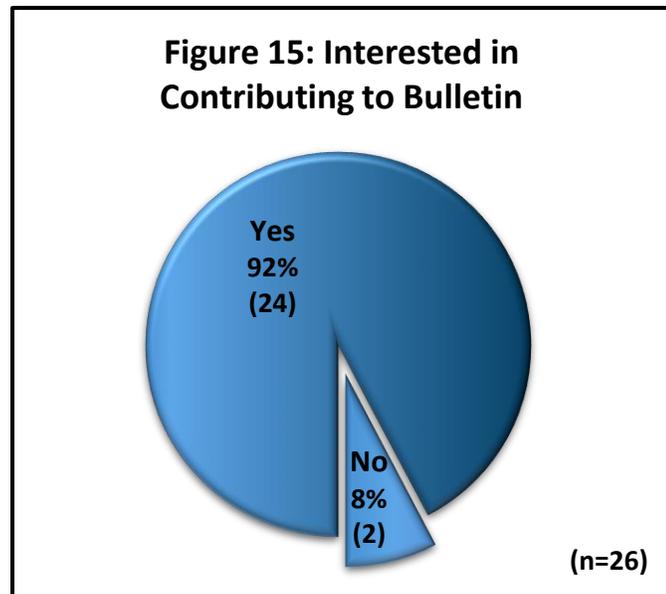
As shown in Figure 14, all proposed bulletin contents received some level of interest with Highlights of HRCs Statewide receiving the most interest followed closely



by Chronicles of Successful Programs and Analysis of Political/Legal Issues. The least popular content ideas were Profiles of Leaders, Reviews of Books, and Profiles of “Unsung Heroes” in Human Relations. The Calendar

of Events and Highlights of Community Organizations were in the mid-range of desired bulletin contents.

As a final bulletin-related question, respondents were asked if they themselves—or members of their HRC—would be interested in contributing content to a bulletin of this type. As seen in Figure 15, the clear majority of respondents who answered this question are interested in contributing to a Human Relations bulletin.



Four respondents skipped this question, including one whose survey was abandoned just after responding “Extremely interested” to the previous

question on the Bias-Free network initiative.⁴⁰ Examination of the answering-patterns of the remaining four respondents who skipped this question led the researcher to the conclusion that a third option of “Potentially interested” should have been provided for this yes/no question. All four respondents who skipped this question regarding contributing to the bulletin had expressed interest in receiving the bulletin: two extremely and two potentially; all four also went on to answer the remaining questions of the survey.

Respondents were also asked if they could think of any other contents that they would like to see distributed statewide. Five respondents replied with these comments:

- Best Practices of marketing materials, cable-access channel HRCs PSAs
- Reports on human rights violations and campaign victories
- Case studies and/or best practices
- Highlights of resources, tools, and educational materials (including videos) on human relations and human rights topics, and where to obtain them. Update on federal, state or local legislation that affects human relations
- Info about how other HRCs are organized, funded, activities they engage in, issues they take on—things that would give us a statewide perspective and info we can refer to help make the case for our needs. Also, people who can be contacted around the State for specific types of information/knowledge.

California Human Relations/Service-Learning Initiative

To further human relations networking and support capacities within the state of California, a partnership between HRCs and CSU campuses is currently being considered. Such a partnership has the potential to benefit CSU students as well as enrich the capacity of HRCs to serve their communities. Most importantly, the citizens of California stand to benefit considerably from this partnership between CSU CCEs and HRCs—more human resources translate to more service to the populations and issues HRCs exist to serve.

Worked with college students previously? This final section of the survey began with a description of service-learning and its mutual benefits to students, HRCs,

⁴⁰ Several unsuccessful attempts were made by the researcher to reach this respondent regarding completing the abandoned survey as the respondent had been answering all questions previous to #18 enthusiastically. This respondent left the survey with seven questions remaining unanswered and did not return to the survey to complete it.

and the citizens HRCs serve. Firstly, to determine each HRCs past experience in working with local colleges and students, respondents were asked three questions: 1) has the HRC ever worked with college students engaged in service-learning in their community, 2) if so, was the experience generally positive, generally negative, or mixed, and 3) if so, what institution provided the students?

None of the responding HRCs rated their experience with college students as generally negative. Just over half of our respondents reported having worked with colleges and students in the past; three quarters of these reported their experience as generally positive while the remaining quarter of responding HRCs rated their experience as mixed.

Respondents were asked to report the name of the institution that provided the students, and 11 of the 17 HRCs that reported having previously worked with college students listed the names of the providing colleges. Five of the listed colleges are within the University of California (UC) system: UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Hastings, UC Irvine, and UC Los Angeles. Three private colleges were also listed: University of San Francisco, University of Southern California, and Santa Clara University School of Law. Colleges within the CSU system that HRCs reported previously working with are:

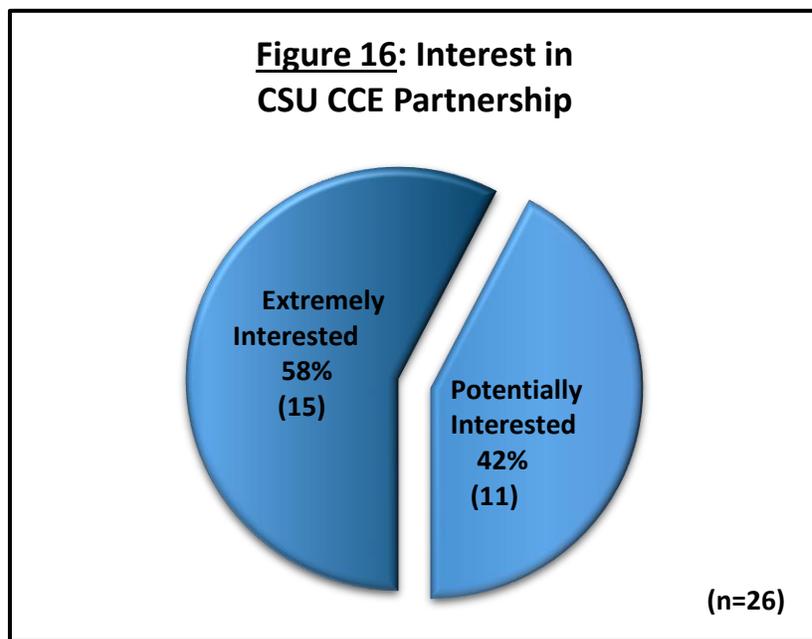
- Chico State
- CSU Fullerton (2)
- Humboldt State
- CSU Long Beach
- CSU Los Angeles (3)
- San Francisco State

This information is invaluable to CAHRO and the CSU CCEs as they now know many HRCs have already worked with colleges and students, and—for the most part, the experience has been positive for the HRC. This knowledge can be used to guide CSU CCEs to the logical starting point for pilot partnership programs.

Located near a CSU campus? After stating that the CSU system is very committed to service-learning partnerships in the community, respondents were asked if there is a CSU campus located close enough to their HRC to allow them to work with students from that campus. Those who answered no—of which there were two—were taken to the closing page of the survey. Two survey respondents skipped this and the

remaining survey questions. Of the 26 remaining HRCs who answered this question, nearly all (23) responded yes, there is a CSU campus nearby—with the remainder (3) responding, “I don’t know.” These 26 respondents were presented the final question of the survey regarding their interest in partnering with their local CSU campus.

Interest in CSU CCE service-learning partnership (Figure 16): This final survey question asked respondents to rate their general interest in exploring the possibility of a service-learning partnership with their local CSU campus as, a) extremely interested, b) potentially interested, or c) not at all interested.



As Figure 16 above shows, all responding HRCs expressed interest in the CSU CCE service-learning partnership—with the majority expressing extreme interest.⁴¹ Each of these HRCs also provided contact information for follow-up on this and the other discussed CAHRO initiatives. The result: CAHRO and CSU CCEs now have access to 26 HRCs who are interested in exploring a partnership with CSU CCEs, and

⁴¹ The researcher decided not to draw any inferences regarding the two respondents who skipped this question. As stated previously, one respondent had abandoned the survey earlier for unknown reasons. Although the researcher considered marking the other non-response as “Not at all interested”—especially since this respondent had reported having a “mixed” experience working with students previously—the researcher decided there was not enough information to draw this conclusion.

the majority of these are enthusiastic about the prospect of working with college students and CSU campuses. We will next explore the details of which CSU campuses are located near interested HRCs and discuss each HRCs proximity to its nearest CSU campus.

The map that follows (Figure 17) displays the locations of all 23 CSU campuses. Highlighted in yellow are the campuses that have at least one nearby HRC interested in developing a service-learning partnership:

Figure 17: Map of CSU Campuses with Interested HRC Nearby

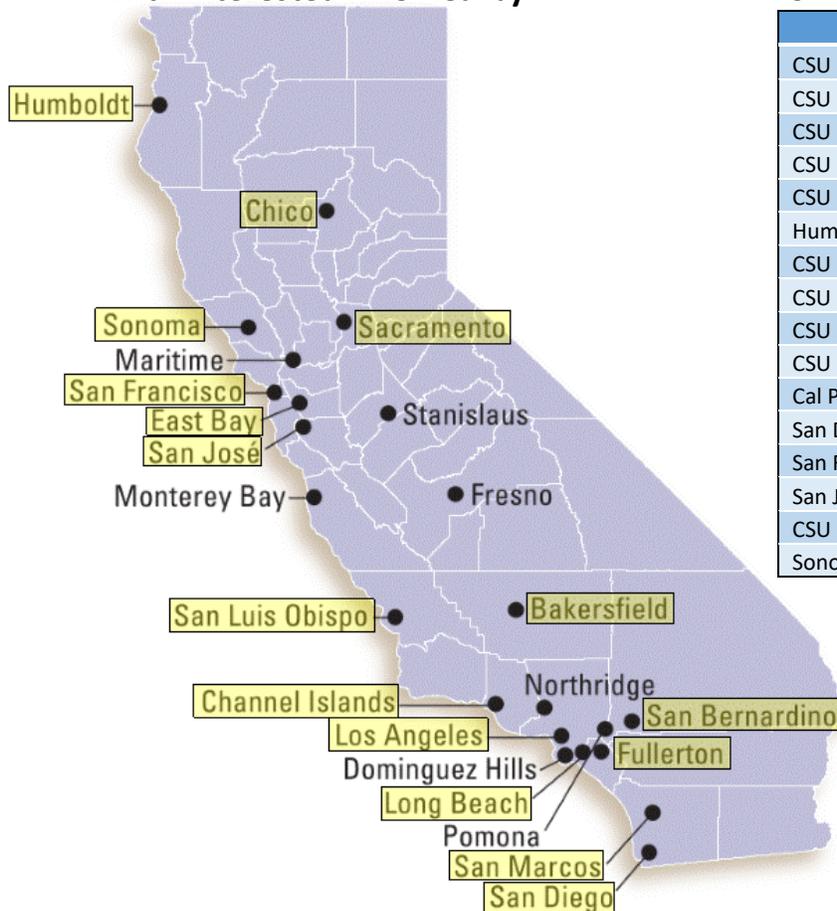


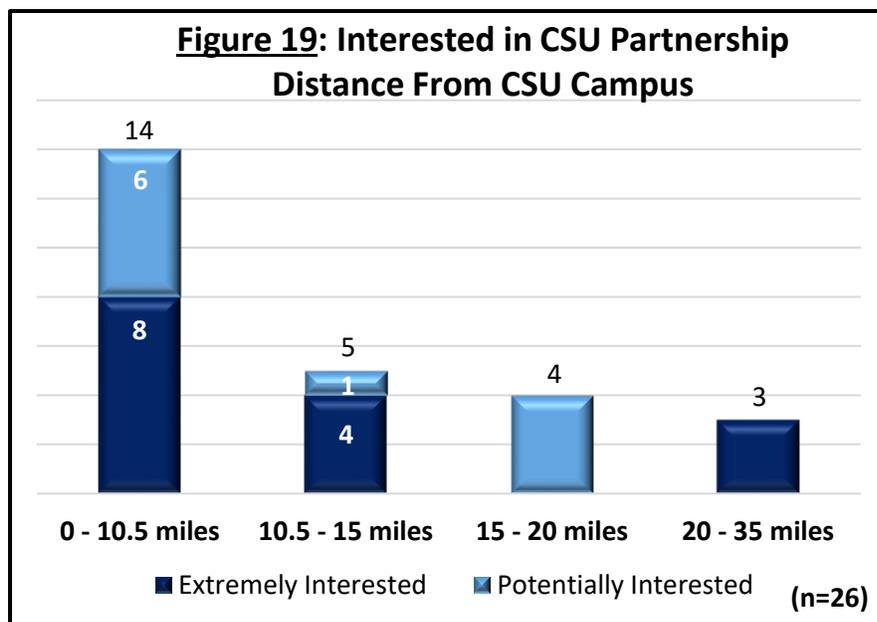
Table 1: CSU Campuses with # of Nearby Interested HRCs

CSU NAME	# OF HRCs
CSU Bakersfield	1
CSU Channel Islands	1
CSU Chico	1
CSU East Bay	7
CSU Fullerton	1
Humboldt State	1
CSU Long Beach	1
CSU Los Angeles	3
CSU Sacramento	1
CSU San Bernardino	2
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	1
San Diego State	1
San Francisco State	2
San Jose State	4
CSU San Marcos	1
Sonoma State	1

Nearly three quarters of the 23 CSU campuses have at least one HRC nearby that is interested in forming a service-learning partnership. Table 1 above lists the highlighted CSU campuses along with the number of interested HRCs in their general

vicinity.⁴² One of the HRCs included in Table 1 (see page 35) for CSU San Bernardino (CSUSB) is actually nearby a satellite campus of CSUSB. Further research is required to ascertain if other CSU satellite campuses are nearer to those HRCs that are located farther away from a CSU main campus.

Proximity/Geography—Location of Interested HRCs in Relation to CSU Campuses (Figure 18): CSU CCE community partnerships are best created and maintained at the local level. Proximity is important to the success of the partnership—both to the students and to the partner. Commuting time and limited access to transportation can be barriers for students, and partners appreciate students allocating their time to achieving project goals—not traveling long distances to and from the partner’s location. With this in mind, the researcher correlated the distance in miles from each CSU campus to an HRC interested in a community partnership.



Combining columns one and two in Figure 18, three quarters (19) of HRCs that are interested in a CSU CCE Service-Learning partnership are within 15 miles of a CSU campus—12 are extremely interested and 7 potentially; half of those (14 HRCs) are

within 10.5 miles—8 extremely interested and 6 potentially. Within this later grouping, just over one third (9 HRCs) are within five miles of a CSU campus. The following CSU campuses have an interested HRC within 15 miles (E or P represents extremely or potentially interested HRCs):

⁴² In Table 1 (page 35), some interested HRCs have been counted more than once as they are near to more than one CSU campus.

5 miles or less:

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (P)
CSU Chico (P)
CSU East Bay (E)
CSU Long Beach (E)
CSU Los Angeles (E)
San Jose State (E, E)

5-10.5 miles:

CSU Bakersfield (P)
CSU Channel Islands (E)
Humboldt State (P)
CSU Los Angeles (E)
CSU San Bernardino (P)
San Diego State (P)
San Francisco State (E)

10.5-15 miles:

CSU East Bay (E)
Sonoma State (E)
CSU San Bernardino, Palm Desert Campus (P)
CSU Fullerton (E)
San Francisco State (E)

One quarter (7) of interested HRCs are located 15-plus miles away from their nearest CSU campus, and three of those are between 20-35 miles away. Depending on the partner (HRC) and the nature of the service-learning project, a distance of 15+ miles may or may not make a substantial difference. These HRCs that are farther away from a CSU campus may have more limited partnership options, however opportunities can be explored and beneficial connections made regardless of distance. As is the case with CSU San Bernardino, CSU satellite campuses may be located near these outlying HRCs; further research would be helpful in this regard.

The following CSU campuses have an interested HRC 15-plus miles from their campus (E or P represents extremely or potentially interested HRC):

15-20 miles:

San Jose State (P)
CSU Los Angeles (P)
CSU East Bay (P)
Sacramento State (P)

20-35 miles:

CSU East Bay (E, E)

San Diego State (E)

CSU San Marcos (E)

This information on proximity provides the CSU CCEs invaluable information as to how to approach HRCs who are interested in a CCE community partnership. Projects that require close contact with service-learning students can be designed with HRCs very nearby CSU campuses while projects that require little or no on-site contact can be slated for HRCs slightly farther away.

Suggest specific opportunities or projects? Those HRCs with a level of interest in partnering with CSU CCEs were asked if they could think of any general opportunities or specific projects at their HRC that might be addressed through a service-learning partnership: three quarters of interested HRCs (19) responded yes to this question.

Respondents were then given the opportunity via a comment box to describe any service-learning project ideas and 18 respondents did so. One HRC reported that project ideas would need to be discussed at a commission meeting. Similarly, another HRC responded that they are developing their 2017-18 work plan and it will likely include projects that would “facilitate collaboration and service-learning partnerships with CSUs.” Another responded that all of their programs are appropriate for service-learning partnership. Fifteen HRCs responded with specific service-learning project ideas as follows (numbers in parenthesis represent the number of HRCs who recorded the same project idea):

Community Outreach

Community forums, including developing content (4)

Community events and event coordination (4)

Human Rights Day

Pride parade

Make a Difference Day

Martin Luther King Day

Cesar Chavez events

Specific Projects

ACLU People Power Project

Major Race Equity Program

Indigenous Peoples Advocacy Project

Police-Community Collaboration Program
Junior Commissioners (high school students)

Research-Related Project Ideas

Surveys and data analysis on human relations topics (2)
Tracking hate crime statistics
LGBTQI+ community survey/data analysis accessing needs
Surveying best practices
Research/proposal writing on equity initiatives (homelessness, criminal justice)
Research to better understand police/student interactions on/off campus

Direct HRC Support

Community outreach/education, general
Fundraising for HRC activities
Supporting HRC staff in general (to complete goals/objectives)
Build the brand of the HRC
Social media outreach
Assist in building local network of social justice advocates

Miscellaneous Areas in Need of Service-Learning Support

Youth projects (2)
Cultural awareness
Disabilities
Educational equity
Elder abuse
Employment equity
Gentrification
Human trafficking
Racism bias
Re-entry
School-to-prison pipeline

These ideas for service-learning partnerships—community outreach, research, and general human relations/rights programs and issues support—represent opportunities for students and professors from a wide range of academic disciplines. The disciplines of Sociology, Communications, Psychology, Criminal Justice, and Social Work—just to name a few—are well-suited to develop community partnerships with HRCs addressing social justice and social change. Further research is required to match these ideas above to appropriate college courses. Creativity and a spirit of mutual cooperation between CSU professors and HRCs has the potential to greatly impact the lives of CSU students and Californians alike in immensely positive ways.

6. Conclusion

The findings presented in this report satisfy the dual-purpose of this research project: to gather information relevant to CAHRO's mission and to explore the feasibility of creating service-learning partnerships between HRCs and CSU campuses.

Corroborating previous research, this project verified that the majority of HRCs lack funding and adequate staffing. Also in-line with previous research is the data gathered on the types of populations served by HRCs and the issue they are facing in their communities. This research provides CAHRO an up-to-date snapshot of California communities covering a wide geographical area.

The researcher's findings as relates to the three CAHRO initiatives is perhaps the most exciting and valuable aspect of this research project. The Bias-Free network initiative was embraced by all responding HRCs as was the Human Relations Bulletin initiative. Additionally, all responding HRCs expressed interest in the California Human Relations/Service-Learning Initiative—an initiative that is not only important and beneficial to CAHRO but to CSU CCEs and CSU students going forward.

Most interestingly, these three initiatives are co-related in that CSU professors and students can now work with HRCs to develop and maintain both the Bias-Free network and the Human Relations Bulletin.

The researcher intends to add the findings of a concurrent research project to this report at a future date. The concurrent research surveyed CSU CCEs to determine their level of interest in partnering with HRCs. The addition of this information will serve to deepen and concretize the results of this study as pertains to the CAHRO initiatives.

By far, the largest beneficiaries of this research will be the citizens of California as CAHRO, CSU students, CCEs, and HRCs work together to cultivate a greater climate of respect and inclusion for all who call our state their home—regardless of their race, ethnicity, immigration status, age, faith, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.

APPENDIX A: *Informed Consent and Survey Instrument*

Informed Consent Email:

My name is Kim McDonald and I am an undergraduate Sociology student at California State University Channel Islands. I am contacting you because I am conducting research on behalf of the **California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO)** to learn about the needs, capacities, and interests of HRCs throughout our state, as well as to gauge the potential interest of HRCs in developing service-learning partnerships with California State University (CSU) campuses. We would like to ask you to participate in the research by completing the brief attached survey. The survey is designed to take no more than 15 minutes and will provide invaluable data to help CAHRO find ways to better serve HRCs and to build stronger human relations networks in our state.

If there is another person within your organization that would be more appropriate to complete this survey, please forward this email to that person.

Research participation: This research was approved by the California State University, Channel Islands Institutional Review Board. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participation at any time, your decision will not prejudice your current or future relationship with CAHRO or CSU Channel Islands. If you experience any discomfort in response to the survey questions, you may terminate the survey process at any time. Data obtained in this survey will be kept by the Supervising Professor for a period of 3 years on an encrypted flash drive with password protection. SurveyMonkey—the provider chosen for implementation of this survey—employs Transport Layer Security to ensure the safety of your data across their network.

If an issue should arise during or after participating in this survey or you have any questions about this study you may contact the researcher, Kim McDonald, at [\(805\) 320-3516](tel:8053203516) or email kim.mcdonald168@myci.csuci.edu. You may also contact the supervising faculty member, Dennis Downey, Ph.D., at [\(805\) 437-3315](tel:8054373315) or email dennis.downey@csuci.edu. Additionally, if you have specific questions about CAHRO, you may contact Ann Noel, Esq., CAHRO President, at noel@noelworkplaceconsulting.com. For questions or issues regarding your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [805-437-8496](tel:8054378496) or via email at irb@csuci.edu.

Clicking on the link below will take you to the survey; doing so implies your consent to participate in this research:

Survey Instrument:

CAHRO / CSU Centers for Community Engagement Human Relations Survey

What is the name of your HRC? _____

NEEDS AND CAPACITIES

Resources: Budget & Staff

CAHRO would first like to ask some basic questions about the resources available to you to engage in human relations work in your community.

1.

What is the level of annual funding, if any, for your HRC (including public and private sources)?

- Less than \$1,000.
- Between \$1,000 and \$5,000
- Between \$5,000 and \$25,000
- Between \$25,000 and \$100,000
- Over \$100,000

2.

Considering all of your HRC's paid staff together (if any), how many full-time equivalent positions do they represent? _____

Human Relations Issues

CAHRO would like to be able to offer the most relevant support possible to HRCs in our state. To do so, we would like to learn more about who your HRC works with in the community, and the issues that your HRC is addressing.

3.

For each of the groups or populations listed below, please indicate whether your HRC works *with* them or *on their behalf*. (Choose all that apply.)

- African Americans
- Hispanics/Latinos
- Asian Americans and/or Pacific Islanders
- Native Americans/Indigenous Peoples/
- Immigrants and/or refugees
- People with disabilities
- Youth
- Elders
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender communities
- Women
- Religious or faith communities
- Other (please specify) _____

4.

For each of the following issue areas, please check each appropriate box next to the issue area to indicate whether that issue is:

Column 1) a current issue affecting your community

Column 2) a current focus of the work of your HRC

Column 3) an area for which you would welcome information, training, or technical assistance:

	Community Issue?	HRC Focus?	Welcome Assistance?
Racial/ethnic equity			
Immigration and/or refugee resettlement			
Human trafficking			
Hunger and food insecurity			
Homelessness and housing access			
Neighborhood displacement (gentrification)			
Employment equity			
Educational access and equity			
Transportation access and equity			
Environmental racism/justice			
Incarceration/re-entry/recidivism			
Healthcare access and equity			

If there is any other issue central to the work of your HRC not listed above, please identify that issue here:

Human Relations Activities

CAHRO would like to learn more about the specific activities and capacities of HRCs in our state. The following questions ask about the kind of activities that your HRC engages in, as well as any specific capacities for doing so.

5.

Does your commission formally receive complaints from your community about human relations issues?

- Yes
 No

If yes:

Do you have any formal capacities or powers associated with those complaint procedures?

- Yes
 No

If yes, please describe:

6.

Do law enforcement or criminal justice agencies currently share specific information on community issues with your HRC – such as hate crimes or hate incidents?

- Yes
 No

If no, would you find that information useful?

- Yes
- No

7.

Is your HRC—or another agency that you work with in your community—currently utilizing Restorative Justice in any of your work?

- Yes
- No

8.

Has your HRC organized a forum for citizens to interact and engage on human relations matters in your community?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what topic(s) have been addressed in recent forums?

California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO) Initiatives

CAHRO is currently planning services and initiatives in a range of areas to revitalize and support a statewide network of HRCs that can effectively educate, advocate, and promote progress on human relations issues. We would like to learn about how relevant and useful you might find these initiatives.

CAHRO is currently seeking funding to develop a statewide “bias-free network” focused on the effective prevention of and response to hate crimes and hate incidents.

9.

Does your HRC organize any sort of formal response to hate crimes and hate incidents in your community?

- Yes
- No

10.

Does your HRC sponsor any type of program or activity to prevent hate crimes and hate incidents?

- Yes
- No

11.

Please rate your level of interest in participating in a regional and statewide bias-free network:

- Extremely interested.

- Potentially interested
- Not at all interested.

["Not at all interested" will skip this question.]

Which of the following resources would be most useful in helping your HRC to organize a bias-free network in your region?

- Technical expertise
- Funding
- Training
- Other (please specify) _____

CAHRO is working on the creation and distribution of an annual or semiannual bulletin that will include a wide range of information relevant to human relations around the state.

12.

Please rate your level of interest in receiving a statewide human relations bulletin from CAHRO:

- Extremely interested.
- Potentially interested
- Not at all interested.

["Not at all interested" will skip these questions]

Which of the following bulletin contents would be of greatest interest and utility to you? (Please mark all that apply.):

- Calendar of statewide human relations events
- Chronicles of successful human relations programs or activities
- Profiles of leaders in human relations
- Profiles of "unsung heroes" in human relations
- Highlights of human relations commissions
- Highlights of community organizations
- Reviews of books relevant to human relations
- Analyses of political or legal issues relevant to human relations

Can you think of any other contents that you would like to see distributed statewide?

Would you (or members of your HRC) be interested in contributing content to a bulletin of this type?

- Yes
- No

CAHRO is currently working with California State University’s Centers for Community Engagement (CCEs) to develop service-learning partnerships between human relations organizations and students enrolled in college classes.

Service-Learning

Service-learning is a practice in higher education that links university course content to active service in the community. Service-learning partnerships can be very effective in providing student energy to accomplish projects benefitting the community that might be impossible to accomplish otherwise. We believe that this model might be very powerful to apply to issues of human relations in our state.

Each CSU campus has a Center for Community Engagement (CCE) that serves as the focal point for community partnerships with their surrounding communities. CCEs help to develop partnerships between course instructors who want to integrate service-learning experiences into their classes with community organizations operating in relevant fields of action.

The issues of diversity and social justice at the heart of human relations are relevant to many service-learning classes, and could provide invaluable learning experiences to students. At the same time, students in service-learning classes can provide invaluable services to HRCs, including—but not limited to—the following:

- gathering data and conducting limited research projects
- assisting to plan and implement events such as community forums and cultural fairs
- helping to develop and conduct public awareness or advocacy campaigns
- writing and designing content for HRC publications

14.

Has your HRC ever worked with college students engaged in service activities within your community?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how would you assess the experience?

- Generally positive
- Mixed
- Generally negative

What college or university were these students associated with? _____

15.

The California State University system is very committed to service-learning partnerships in the community. Is there a CSU campus located close enough to your HRC to allow you to work with students from that campus?

- Yes
- No (*No skips to question #18.*)
- I don’t know.

16. Would you be generally interested in exploring the possibility of a service-learning partnership with your local CSU campus?

- Extremely interested
- Potentially interested
- Not at all interested

17. [Only those who express interest will see this question]

Can you think of any general opportunities or specific projects at your HRC that might be addressed through a service-learning partnership?

- Yes
- No

If yes: Can you briefly describe the opportunities or projects?

18. In the near future, CAHRO representatives may wish to reach out to discuss how we may best be able to support your HRC. Please provide information for the most appropriate contact person associated with your HRC:

Contact person: _____

Position: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Is the above contact the person completing this survey?

- Yes
- No

Survey Completion & Thank You Page:

CAHRO and CSUCI are very grateful that you have taken the time to assist us in our efforts to better serve the California human relations community. If you would like to learn more about CAHRO, please visit our webpage (cahro.org) or contact Ann Noel, CAHRO President, at [<noel@noelworkplaceconsulting.com>](mailto:noel@noelworkplaceconsulting.com).

If you have any questions about this survey, about CSUCI, or about CSU CCEs, please contact Dennis Downey, Ph.D. at dennis.downey@csuci.edu or 805-437-3315. You can learn more about community engagement at the California State University by visiting this website: <http://www.calstate.edu/cce/>.

CAHRO and the California State University Centers for Community Engagement hope to work with you in the future in our common efforts to cultivate a greater climate of respect and inclusion for all in California.