

AIR TIME

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Survey of Racial Attitudes continued **2**

AIR celebrates 25 years of service **3**

Applied Information Resources is a non-profit, public policy research and community information organization dedicated to:

- Citizen education on public issues.
- Assisting human service organizations in evaluating their programs, and
- Providing the best possible information to decision makers responding to changing human and urban needs.

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Survey of Racial Attitudes in Cincinnati

Applied Information Resources recently released a survey of racial attitudes in Cincinnati. Working in collaboration with the National Conference of Community and Justice and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, AIR and the other two organizations unveiled complementary research that revealed major differences in how African-Americans and whites view race relations in Greater Cincinnati. The most significant gaps in opinion emerged when white and Black survey participants responded to race-related questions on specific community issues.

AIR's report focuses on Cincinnati residents, and AIR contracted with U.C.'s Institute for Policy Research to conduct a random telephone survey that included

203 African-Americans and 300 whites. This survey and ongoing focus groups, interviews, and public forums were made possible by grants from the Stephen H.

The largest gap between whites and African-Americans shows up in their differing assessments of "fair treatment" by the Cincinnati Police..

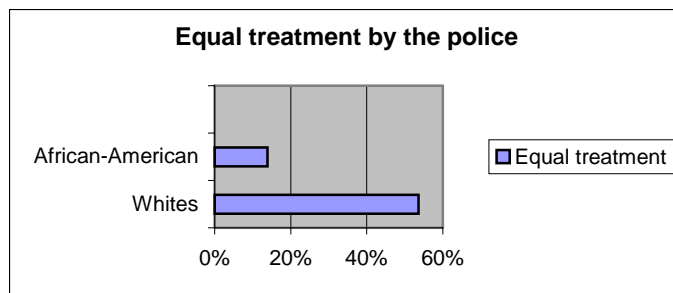
Wilder Foundation, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, and the Murray and Agnes Seasongood Good Government Foundation. A final report will be released later this year.

The rest of this article is an excerpt from AIR's survey.

What do the responses reveal about our race relations in Cincinnati?

Certainly the analysis shows significant differences in the perceptions of white and black residents. These differences come out in the responses to generic questions about racial/ethnic viewpoints, but they emerge even more strongly from the results of questions that relate to life in Cincinnati.

The largest gap between whites and African-Americans shows up in their differing assessments of "fair treatment" by the Cincinnati Police. After the recent history of bad relations between the police and African-Americans that culminated in the fatal shooting of Timothy Thomas by a Cincinnati Police officer and the April disturbances of 2001, this finding is not surprising. Despite reform efforts such as the Collaborative/DOJ Agreement, the fact that so many African-Americans perceive unequal treatment



(Continued on page 2)

RACE PERCEPTIONS STUDY CONTINUED

(Continued from page 1)

by the Police indicates that more work still needs to be done in this area.

Although a similar gap exists in terms of perceptions by black and white residents concerning equal treatment by the media, it is important to note that a slight majority of white respondents said that the media does not provide equal treatment to African-Americans. Further research is needed to discover the reasons behind these views.

Black and white residents sharply divide on the question of whether Cincinnati has made progress in improving race relations in recent years. While almost two-thirds of the white respondents answered that progress has occurred, over two-thirds of the African-Americans disagreed. Community leaders working to bridge Cincinnati's racial divide dare not ignore this significant gap.

When asked to cite specific examples of unfair treatment "in the last thirty days," African-American survey participants provided significantly larger numbers of citations than their white counterparts. Stores and the workplace were the primary places where unfair treatment occurred, and African-Americans in higher education and income brackets reported these incidents in greater numbers. The good news emerging from this question was the relatively small number of cases of unfair treatment.

A significant difference shows up in one of the questions dealing with cultural assimilation.

While 71% of the white respondents agreed that "a smoothly functioning society" required ethnic and racial minorities to adapt to mainstream American culture, only 50% of the African-American survey participants recorded that point of view.

Although the remaining survey questions prompted different responses from white and black Cincinnati residents, the differences are less pronounced. In fact, several questions show a coming together of the opinions of African-American and white Cincinnatians.

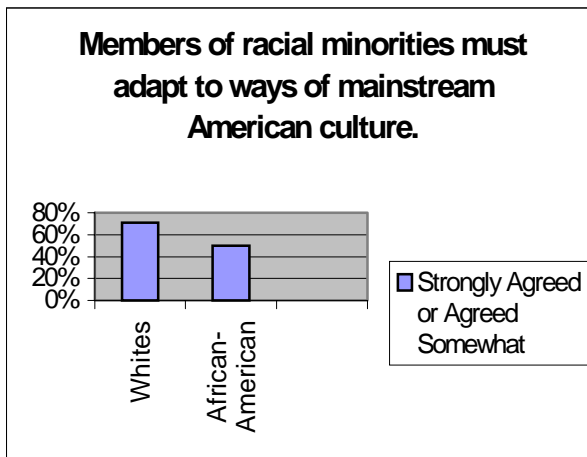
For instance, two cultural assimilation questions reveal this serendipity of opinion. Large majorities of both white and black respondents disagreed with the statement that racial and ethnic minorities will never fit in with American mainstream culture. Further, 95% and 91% of white and African-American survey participants agreed that ethnic and racial groups should have the right to maintain their own traditions.

Two final points need to be

made in this conclusion. First of all, the researchers hope that the survey findings will not be viewed in a negative light as further bad news about Cincinnati. The authors offer the results as information that should be used by community leaders and concerned citizens who are involved in ongoing activities and projects to improve race relations in this city.

Secondly, surveys such as this one can supply large samples of public opinion. However, limitations of both methodology and scope prevent random telephone surveys from providing the reasons that lie behind the opinions. In order to go beyond those limitations, a further step of this project is to add meaning and context to the survey results through a series of focus groups and interviews with African-American and white Cincinnatians. This process is moving forward, and a review of this research will be included in a final report.

For the rest of this report, see www.airinc.org



AIR CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

AIR's Annual Dinner on May 15th celebrated the 25th birthday of Applied Information Resources.



Bishop Black

To commemorate AIR's quarter of a century in operation, Alice Schneider created a power point presentation of the highlights of those 25 years. It showcased major research projects such as the four homeless studies from 1987 - 2001, and AIR's role as a resource in organizing citizens to take on regional issues and campaign finance reform. It also portrayed AIR's 24 years of facilitating the Community Issues Forums at Christ Church Cathedral.

Besides celebrating AIR's 25 years of community service, the dinner also served as an occasion for honoring Bishops William G. Black and Herbert Thompson, Jr. as "Friends of AIR." Since Ed Burdell and Bill Woods served as consultants to both Bishops and the Trustees of

the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio from 1986 to 2006, these awards were quite fitting. In making the award presentations, Woods and Burdell emphasized the contributions of Bishops Black and Thompson in addressing human needs, community problems, and issues of social and economic justice.

The Role of Religion in Public Life

Asked to comment on the role of religion in public life, Bishops Black and Thompson delivered thoughtful presentations on this theme. Bishop Thompson expressed his strong opposition to the current movement that links God and Christian values to one political party. He decried this trend as the antithesis of this country's tradition of the separation of church and state and as abhorrent to the real meaning of the Gospels. Not only do the leaders of this movement preach intolerance, noted Thompson, but their message seems completely divorced from the teachings of Jesus about social and economic justice and loving one's neighbor.

Bishop Black focused his comments on his concern that current societal trends are fostering a rigid separation between religions and a growing intolerance and refusal to respect differing religious perspectives. A leader in establishing dialogues between different faiths, he sees this rigidity and

intolerance taking hold within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Religion, he charged, should be the catalyst that brings diverse people together in caring communities. Both Bishops Black and Thompson challenged the dinner attendees to be effective counterweights to those negative forces that they see doing great damage to religious life in America.



Bishop Thompson and Ed Burdell

Bishop Thompson's death on August 16, 2006 is acknowledged with great sadness

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AIR depends on individual contributions to support our work. Your contributions help fund the support services, such as equipment, technological services, and staff which are needed to conduct this work. We invite you to assist us as AIR takes on new community issues and challenges. You can now donate online at www.airinc.org

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Public Policy and Research

September 21st Community Issues Forum Features David Pepper and Phil Heimlich

David Pepper and Phil Heimlich will appear at the Christ Church Community Forum on Thursday, September 21 at 12 noon, 318 East Fourth Street. Both are candidates for Hamilton County Commissioner.

Currently serving as one of three Hamilton County Commissioners, **Phil Heimlich**, a Republican, was formerly a Cincinnati City Council member and an assistant Hamilton County prosecutor. He is seeking re-election for a second four-year term as county commissioner, a job he has held since Jan. 1, 2003.

David Pepper, a Democrat, is currently seeking a spot on the Hamilton County, Ohio Board of Commissioners. He was formerly a councilman for the city of Cincinnati.

One of the major issues for the county commissioners is whether to build a new jail or not and how to finance it. This issue and others will be discussed by the two candidates. This kickoff forum on the 21st will be followed by 3 other pre-elections forums on October 5 and 19, and November 2nd.