



**Discrimination in Indiana:
Results of a Statewide Survey**

Conducted by:
The Indiana Civil Rights Commission

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Introduction

Indiana is more diverse than ever before, and economists expect for this to continue. This growing diversity brings forth many challenges. These new Hoosiers are often linguistically and culturally isolated, which many times keep them from receiving the proper care and services they need. It also leads to a greater likelihood of facing illegal discrimination.

As part of the *Indiana Civil Rights Commission's FY 2010-13 Strategic Plan*, a survey was distributed statewide to determine both the prevalence and perception of discrimination in Indiana amid the growing cultural diversity. Despite countless efforts by state and local human rights agencies, community and faith-based groups discrimination remains a constant and persistent problem that must be addressed to ensure equal opportunities for all Hoosiers.

In 1961, the Indiana Civil Rights Commission was formed to eliminate illegal discrimination in the workplace. Since its inception, real estate, education, public accommodation and credit have been added to employment as enforcement areas. Eliminating the existence of discrimination in order to build a better statewide commitment to equality is the task ahead for local and state civil rights commissions, community and faith-based organizations.

The statewide survey sought to explore the public's connections, values, attitudes and perception of civil rights enforcement and discrimination. The goal was to better understand what needs to be communicated to build awareness and to increase Hoosiers concerns about equality.

Before embarking on this survey, the Indiana Civil Rights Commission conducted focus groups to identify values and beliefs that are decisive when discussing discrimination. This contributed greatly to the understanding of public attitudes and crafting relevant questions for the poll.

The statewide survey for the Indiana Civil Rights Commission was conducted among 912 adults in 67 cities and towns in Indiana from October 21, 2010 to October 20, 2011.

Summary of Key Findings

The statewide survey asked Hoosiers questions on their personal experiences involving discrimination. The survey also asked for them to rate the degree in which discrimination remains a problem both locally and statewide. This section provides a summary of key analytical points of the survey.

As we found in the focus group phase of this research, many Indiana residents are unaware of their protections under Indiana Civil Rights laws, and in turn, are unaware that the Indiana Civil Rights Commission exists. At the moment, Hoosiers are generally concerned with discrimination in Indiana, and we find that the public possesses very little understanding as to whom to contact if they are a victim of discrimination.

However, communicating to the public their rights and responsibilities under Indiana Civil Rights laws is not likely to eliminate the problem of discrimination. To raise concern and urgency, linking of factual information about discrimination and the threats of it with people's personal connection to civil rights, their values and everyday lives, must occur. This, much like the civil rights movement of the 20th Century, must be community driven.

The survey data identifies key points about public attitudes toward discrimination that will inform how civil rights agencies, human rights agencies, community and faith-based groups and municipalities can strengthen their commitment to ending discrimination in Indiana.

Hoosiers are still subject to discrimination in the 21st Century

More than half of the respondents polled in the survey (58%) indicated they have faced a form of discrimination in their lifetime. On the surface this is an alarming statistic, however, it is important to note that just because a person indicated they have faced discrimination does not mean they actually faced illegal discrimination.

Discrimination remains a problem in communities throughout the state

More than 90% (90.9%) of the respondents polled in the survey agreed that discrimination remains a problem in Indiana. Just less than 90% (88.5%) of respondents agreed that discrimination remains a problem in their individual community.

The public knows who to contact if they face discrimination

Just less than 80% (79.6%) of the respondents polled indicated they would contact a local or state civil rights commission if they were discriminated against. The remaining respondents (20.4%) indicated they would contact either local or state government, local law enforcement agency or were unsure who to contact.

The public has very little knowledge of state and federal civil rights laws

Less than 20% (17.0%) of respondents clearly understand their protections under state and federal civil rights laws. However, more than 50% of respondents (56.8%) indicated they had a decent understanding of their rights. More than one-fourth of respondents (26.2%) indicated they had very little or no understanding of the state and federal laws that protect their civil rights.

The public has little understanding of the Indiana Civil Rights Commission's services

Just more than 10% (11.1%) of respondents clearly understand what the Indiana Civil Rights Commission does and the services provided. The largest amount of respondents (44.0%) indicated they had a basic understanding of what the Civil Rights Commission does, but were unaware of the enforcement powers and investigation process. The remaining respondents (44.8%) had only heard of the Indiana Civil Rights Commission but had no knowledge of the services provided.

Solutions

Work collectively with local human rights agencies, community and faith-based groups

Through the development of a statewide system for civil rights enforcement with consistent messaging and information local, state and federal civil rights enforcement agencies and community organizations can efficiently use their resources to impact the lives of Hoosiers. A strong grassroots approach will allow service providers to truly understand the issues faced by individuals in their community.

Identify and target both stakeholder groups

Develop outreach and training to meet the needs of both the provider and consumer stakeholder groups statewide. Specific training and resources developed to create tangible impacts and synergy in communities throughout the state.

Address the civil rights issues of today

As community, not-for-profit, faith-based groups and municipalities work collectively to eliminate discrimination from the Hoosier state they must first identify the civil rights issues of today. Many of these issues and disparities have existed for decades, however new emerging forms of discrimination exist. It is vital that these groups adapt to the civil rights issues in their community by using a grassroots approach and listening to the people. By developing relationships with these often underserved and underrepresented Hoosiers, service providers can more adequately determine and combat the issues facing Hoosiers in communities throughout the state.

Major Challenge

Reaching populations most in need

The major challenge facing local, state and federal civil rights agencies is reaching those populations most in need. Programs and services exist to assist underrepresented and underserved populations, but matching these resources to those most in need has been a constant struggle. In addition to extensive training for housing providers, employers, educators and other service providers, these groups must effectively reach the population at large.

Conclusion

As local, state and federal civil rights agencies begin to further establish partnerships with community, not-for-profit, faith-based groups and municipalities their message will better reach individuals in need. It is important that these partnerships exist so that: (1) services aren't duplicated, (2) no confusion exists as to who to contact and (3) Hoosiers receive better service. As Indiana becomes increasingly diverse, individuals will continue to face illegal discrimination. As the statewide system for civil rights enforcement is further strengthened, and becomes more cumbersome, enhanced awareness of civil rights and responsibilities under Indiana Civil Rights laws will come to fruition.

Survey Results

Table 1

Discrimination remains a problem

	in your Community	in Indiana
Definitely agree	48.6%	64.6%
Somewhat agree	39.9%	26.3%
Neutral	9.9%	8.8%
Somewhat disagree	1.2%	0.4%
Completely disagree	0.4%	0.0%

Table 2

Describe your understanding

	Indiana Civil Rights Commission	State and Federal Laws
Clearly understands	11.1%	17.0%
Fairly understands	44.0%	56.8%
Only heard of it before	36.6%	23.1%
Has never heard of it before	8.2%	3.1%

Have you ever been discriminated against?

Yes	58.8%
No	41.2%

Who would you contact if you were discriminated against?

The police	8.7%
Local/state government	11.7%
Local civil rights agency	47.0%
Indiana Civil Rights Commission	32.6%

The Indiana Civil Rights Commission offers free, taxpayer-supported legal assistance in cases involving discrimination.

True	74.8%
False	25.2%

Demographic Information

Gender

Female	68.0%
Male	32.0%

Age

18-21	2.5%
22-25	5.1%
26-30	6.6%
31-40	17.2%
41-50	26.7%
51-60	25.6%
61 or over	16.1%

Race/Nationality

White, non-Hispanic	58.1%
Hispanic	18.9%
African American	17.4%
Asian-Pacific Islander	1.1%
Native American	1.1%
Other	3.3%