

2-1985

Needs Assessment Survey of the Omaha Black Community

Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR)
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cparpubarchives>

 Part of the [Demography, Population, and Ecology Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs Commons](#)

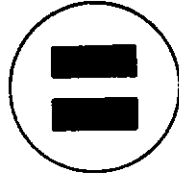
Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation

(CPAR), Center for Public Affairs Research, "Needs Assessment Survey of the Omaha Black Community" (1985). *Publications Archives, 1963-2000*. 244.
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cparpubarchives/244>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Public Affairs Research at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications Archives, 1963-2000 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

URBAN LEAGUE of NEBRASKA Inc.



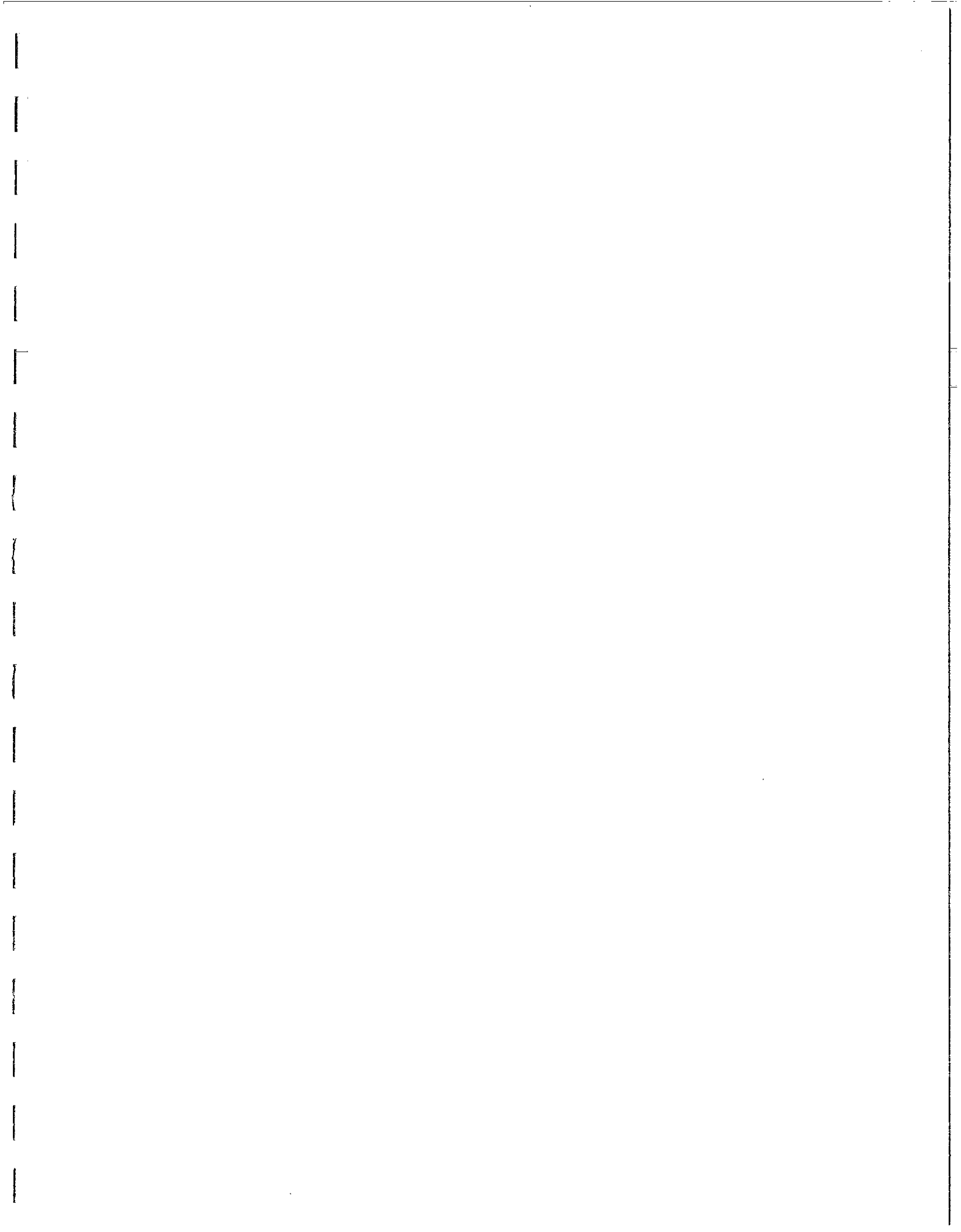
NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY OF THE OMAHA BLACK COMMUNITY



Center for Applied Urban Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha



February, 1984



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank all members of the CAUR and Urban League staff who contributed to this project. The final report was edited by Marian Meier and typed by Joyce Carson. Any value judgments made or implied in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Center for Applied Urban Research or the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

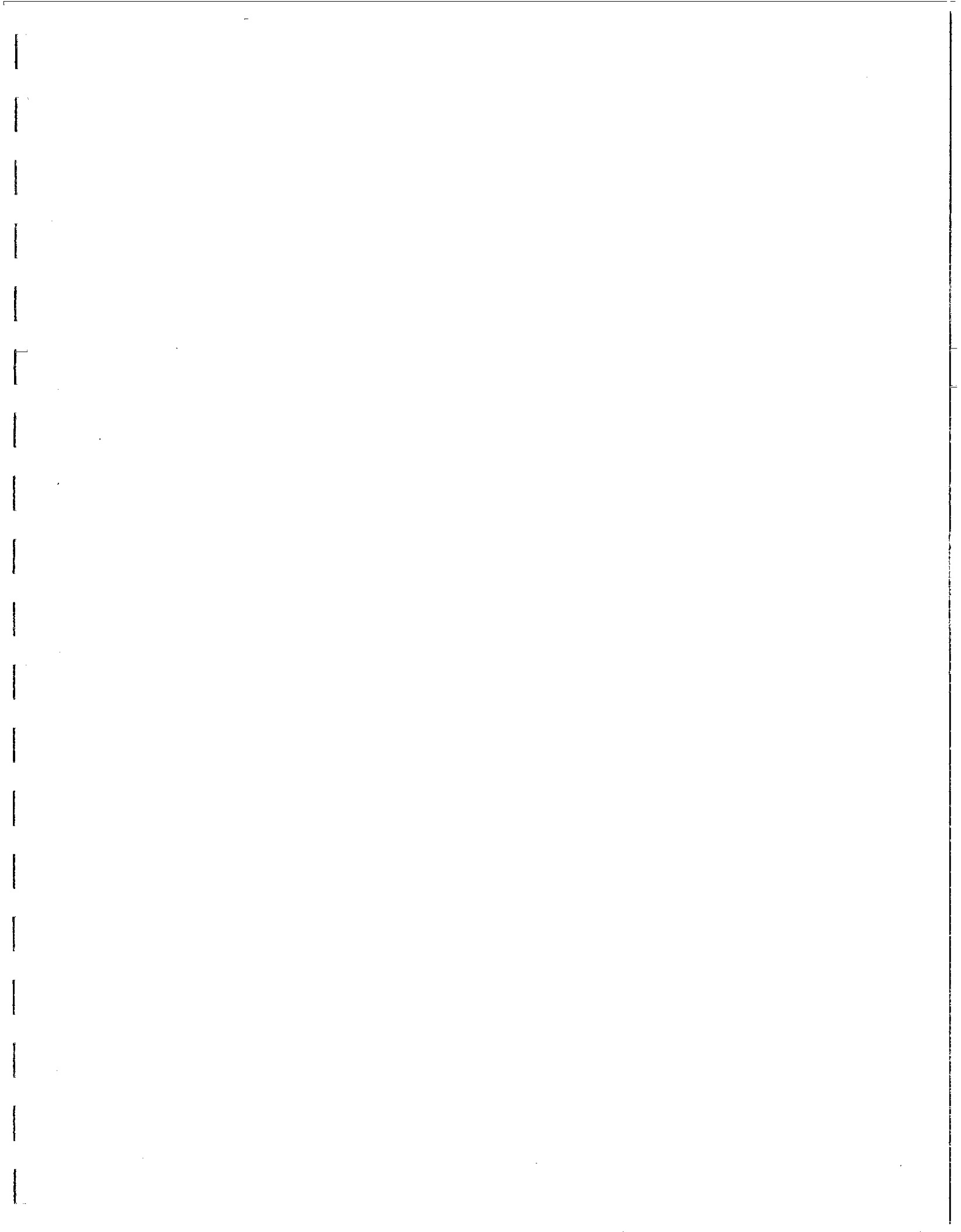
ti

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements.....	i
List of Tables.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Purpose.....	1
Research Methods.....	3
Survey Results.....	5
Demographic Characteristics of Residents.....	5
Housing.....	9
Education.....	15
Recreation.....	22
Public Services.....	24
Health Care.....	29
Administration of Justice.....	31
Employment.....	35
Major Needs.....	39
Conclusion.....	41

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Demographic Characteristics of Resident Respondents.....	6
2	Employment of Blacks and Whites.....	8
3	Housing (Residents).....	10
4	Resident Respondents' Evaluations of Housing Situation.....	12
5	Leaders' Perceptions of Housing Issues.....	14
6	Resident Respondents' Ratings of Education in Omaha Public Schools.....	16
7	Leaders' Perceptions of Education Issues.....	18
8	Recreation Needs (Residents).....	23
9	Leaders' Perceptions of Recreation Issues.....	25
10	Resident Respondents' Evaluation of Public Services.....	27
11	Leaders' Evaluation of Public Services.....	28
12	Leaders' Evaluation of Health Care in the Black Community.....	30
13	Resident Respondents' Perceptions of Administration of Justice Issues.....	32
14	Leaders' Perceptions of Administration of Justice Issues.....	34
15	Resident Respondents' Perceptions of Employment Issues.....	36
16	Leaders' Perceptions of Employment Issues.....	38
17	Resident Respondents' Perception of Major Needs of Omaha Black Community.....	40
18	Leaders' Perceptions of Major Needs of Omaha Black Community.....	40



INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to obtain input from citizens and leaders in the Black community regarding the Black community needs in the following areas:

1. Housing Issues. Residents were asked to respond to several items regarding home ownership, weatherization, availability and quality of housing in the Black community, ability to pay rent or mortgage payments and utilities, and availability of home loans. Leaders were asked to evaluate several aspects of housing in the Black community, including availability and quality, and to identify possible housing problems.
2. Education. Information was gathered from leaders on quality of elementary and high school education, opportunity for post-secondary education and obstacles to pursuit of education and suggestions for overcoming these obstacles. Residents were also asked to rate the quality of elementary and high school education, opportunity for post-secondary education, and other specific aspects of education such as counseling, opportunity for parental input, location, and transfer of students for desegregation.
3. Recreation. Leaders and residents were both asked to give their opinions on the types of recreation that need to be developed or improved.

4. Public Services. Information was gathered from leaders and residents on needs for improvement in various public services such as police protection, fire protection, street and sewer maintenance, garbage collection, weed control, and transportation services. Convenience of access to city and county services and health clinics was also evaluated by residents.
5. Administration of Justice. Residents were asked to give their opinions on several areas related to crime and safety such as police protection, crime involving Blacks against Blacks, attitudes of law enforcement officers assigned to North Omaha, police/community relations, and opportunities for Blacks in law enforcement.

In addition to a number of the above questions, leaders were asked for their views on how the Black community could work to reduce crime and how administration of laws in the courts could be improved.
6. Employment. Residents were asked about their own employment status and occupation, as well as their evaluation of existing employment services. Leaders were asked to evaluate unemployment in the Black community, and existing employment services and to indicate what they think are the most important means that Blacks use to find jobs.

In addition, leaders and residents were asked to identify three major needs of the Omaha Black community.

RESEARCH METHODS

The data referred to in this study were based on personal interviews administered between October 22, 1983 and January 23, 1984 of North Omaha residents and Black community leaders.

A random sample of addresses in the North Omaha Black community was drawn from the Omaha street address telephone directory. For the purposes of this study, the North Omaha Black community was defined as the area bordered by Cuming Street, 48th Street, Redick Avenue, and the Missouri River. These boundaries were chosen because they encompass an area that includes a majority of the Omaha 1980 Census tracts containing sizeable Black populations. Both Black and White residents were included in the random sample.

In drawing the sample, addresses were recorded, not names of residents. Interviewers were instructed to interview (1) the head of household or his/her spouse if the head of the household were not available or (2) a household resident age 18 or over. Interviews were conducted by volunteers from the Black community, selected by the Urban League. The interviews were done in the residents' homes and averaged about 30 minutes in length.

The non-random purposive sample of 29 leaders and social service directors in the Black community was selected by members of the Urban League.¹ These interviews were conducted in the business offices or homes of the leaders and averaged about 30 minutes in length.

¹All but one of these leaders were Blacks.

The data for this report are based on the analysis of 111 interviews with residents and 23 interviews with leaders.¹ As is noted in the following section on demographic characteristics of residents, a disproportionate number of the resident respondents were females and were in the older (60 and over) age group, and were not employed.

The questionnaire administered to the residents included primarily closed-ended questions on the topic areas previously outlined. The leaders' questionnaire consisted of both open- and closed-ended questions on these topic areas in order to get more in-depth information on the needs of the Black community and suggestions for possible solutions to community problems.

¹Six leaders refused to be interviewed or could not be reached. Sixteen residents refused. Four additional residents' interviews were obtained but not included in the analysis due to problems of incomplete data.

SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Residents

As shown in Table 1, about 60 percent of the residents interviewed for this study were Blacks and females. The age breakdown of the respondents showed a large percentage of persons 60 and over (38.2 percent). Almost one-fourth of the respondents were under 30.

Almost one-half (48.6 percent) of the residents responding to this survey reported annual household incomes of less than \$10,000. Another 31.2 percent reported annual household incomes between \$10,000 and \$19,999. None of the respondents reported incomes over \$50,000.

When asked to indicate the level of education completed, 28.2 percent reported completing high school, 28.2 percent had some college or vocational training, and 4.5 percent had graduated from college.

Only 47 persons or 42.3 percent said that they were employed. Of these 47 employed individuals, 79.1 percent worked full time. The occupational categories most frequently mentioned were professional/technical (by 21.3 percent) and clerical (by 10.6 percent).

As shown in Table 2, 67.7 percent of the Blacks were unemployed, compared to 40.9 percent of the Whites, which was a significant difference.

While 57.7 percent (64 persons) of the resident respondents indicated that they were unemployed, only 18.6 percent (or 11

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENT RESPONDENTS

	Number	Percent
Race (N=109)		
Black	65	59.6
White	44	40.4
Total	109	100.0
Sex (N=109)		
Male	41	37.6
Female	68	62.4
Total	109	100.0
Age (N=110)		
Under 30	26	23.6
30-39	17	15.5
40-49	14	12.7
50-59	11	10.0
60 and over	42	38.2
Total	110	100.0
Annual Household Income (N=109)		
Less than \$10,000 a year	53	48.6
\$10,000 to \$19,999	34	31.2
\$20,000 to \$29,999	15	13.8
\$30,000 to \$39,999	4	3.7
\$40,000 to \$49,999	3	2.8
Total	109	100.1
Education (N=110)		
0-8 years — grade school	16	14.5
9-11 years — some high school	23	20.9
12 years — completed high school	31	28.2
other — vocational training	9	8.2
13-15 years — some college	22	20.0
16 years — completed college	5	4.5
Graduate or professional school	4	3.6
Total	110	99.9
Employed (N=111)		
Yes	47	42.3
No	64	57.7
Total	111	100.0
Full time	34	79.1
Part time	9	20.9
Total	43 ^{a/}	100.0

^{a/}Data were missing on 4 persons who said they were employed.
Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 1 – Continued

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENT RESPONDENTS

	Number	Percent
Occupation (N=47)		
Professional or technical	10	21.3
Manager, administrator, owner of business	4	8.5
Sales worker	3	6.4
Clerical worker	5	10.6
Craftsman	6	12.8
Operative	6	12.8
Laborer	3	6.4
Service worker	7	14.9
Other	3	6.4
Total	47	100.1
Unemployed (N=59) ^{a/}		
When last employed		
Less than 6 months ago	9	15.3
6-12 months ago	8	13.6
1-2 years ago	4	6.8
Over 2 years ago	38	64.4
Total	59	100.1
Presently looking for work (N=59)	11	18.6
Currently drawing unemployment compensation (N=59)	2	3.4
Occupation Before Unemployment (N=55)		
Professional or technical	4	7.3
Manager, administrator, owner of business	0	0.0
Sales worker	3	5.5
Clerical worker	6	10.9
Craftsman	4	7.3
Operative	6	10.9
Laborer	8	14.5
Service worker	21	38.2
Other	3	5.5
Total	55	100.1

^{a/}Data were missing on 5 unemployed persons.

TABLE 2
EMPLOYMENT OF BLACKS AND WHITES^{a/}

Blacks				Whites			
Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
21	32.3	44	67.7	26	59.1	18	40.9

^{a/}Difference between Blacks and Whites was significant at .01 level.

persons responding to this question said they were presently looking for work, and only two persons reported drawing unemployment compensation. Most of these unemployed persons (64.4 percent) said they had been last employed over two years ago. Further analysis indicated persons 60 and over accounted for 55.2 percent of the unemployed. Since many of these people may be assumed to be retired, this could account in part for the large percentage of the unemployed who are not seeking employment.

Of those individuals currently unemployed, 38.2 percent reported their former occupations to be service worker.

Housing

Residents. Data were gathered from residents on both their personal housing situations and their evaluations of the housing situation in the Black community in general.

Housing characteristics of residents are shown in Table 3. The majority (70.3 percent) of respondents indicated that they owned their homes. About half (50.7 percent) of these homeowners reported owning their homes for 16 or more years.

The greater mobility of renters is evident from the data presented in Table 3. Only 24.2 percent of the renters reported residing at the same address for five or more years.

Relatively low rent and mortgage payments characterized the residents surveyed. Over 40 (40.2 percent) of the respondents reported rent or mortgage payments of less than \$200 per month. Another 33.3 percent had their mortgages paid in full and thus no longer made monthly payments.

TABLE 3
 HOUSING
 (RESIDENTS)
 (N=111 unless otherwise noted)

	Number	Percent
Owners	78	70.3
Length of Time of Home Ownership (N=75)		
1-5 years	14	18.7
6-10 years	11	14.7
11-15 years	12	16.0
16 or more years	38	50.7
Renters	33	29.7
Length of Time at Same Rental Address (N=33)		
1-6 months	7	21.2
7-11 months	0	0.0
1-2 years	7	21.2
25 months to 5 years	11	33.3
Over 5 years	8	24.2
Rent or Mortgage Payments (N=102)		
\$150 or less	24	23.5
\$151-\$200	17	16.7
\$201-\$250	15	14.7
\$251-\$300	5	4.9
\$301-\$350	4	3.9
\$351-\$400	1	1.0
Over \$400	2	2.0
None (mortgage paid)	34	33.3
Highest Monthly Heating Bill		
Under \$50	5	4.5
\$50-\$100	16	14.4
\$101-\$150	30	27.0
\$151-\$200	20	18.0
Over \$200	27	24.3
Don't know (included in rent)	13	11.7
Energy Audit (N=109)	16	14.7
Home Weatherized	56	50.9

Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

Energy costs, however, add substantially to the costs of housing. As shown in Table 3, the majority (69.3 percent) of residents reported that their highest monthly heating bill was over \$100. While only 14.7 percent said their homes had undergone an energy audit, 50.9 percent reported that their homes were weatherized.

Residents' evaluations of the housing situation are shown in Table 4. Ability to pay the monthly rent or mortgage payment appeared to be a somewhat greater problem for Blacks than for Whites. While 50 percent of the Blacks found this to be a problem, only 29.7 percent of the Whites did. Similarly, 60 percent of the Blacks said that their ability to pay their monthly utility bills was a problem; 47.7 percent of the Whites so responded.

Residents were divided over the question regarding their abilities to get home mortgage loans, with about 45 percent of Blacks and Whites reporting this to be a problem. Fewer respondents (39.7 percent of Blacks, 29.5 percent of Whites) rated their abilities to get home improvement loans as a problem.

In addition to these items regarding the individuals' housing situations, respondents were also asked to evaluate the housing situation in the Black community in general. Residents were divided regarding the availability of low or moderate cost housing for purchase in their area. However, significantly more Blacks than Whites (51.6 percent vs. 25.6 percent) rated this as a problem. Somewhat fewer Black residents (41.3 percent) and

TABLE 4

RESIDENT RESPONDENTS' EVALUATIONS OF HOUSING SITUATION

	Blacks						Whites					
	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know		Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Ability to pay monthly rent or mortgage payment (N=77)	17	42.5	20	50.0	3	7.5	25	67.6	11	29.7	1	2.7
Ability to pay monthly utility bill (N=109)	24	36.9	39	60.0	2	3.1	20	45.5	21	47.7	3	6.8
Ability to get home mortgage loan (N=105)	18	29.0	28	45.2	16	25.8	8	18.6	19	44.2	16	37.2
Ability to get home improvement loan (N=107)	23	36.5	25	39.7	15	23.8	11	25.0	13	29.5	20	45.5
Availability of low/moderate cost housing for purchase in this area ^{a/} (N=107)	10	15.6	33	51.6	21	32.8	16	37.2	11	25.6	16	37.2
Availability of low/moderate cost housing for rental units in this area (N=107)	14	22.2	26	41.3	23	36.5	15	34.1	13	29.5	16	36.4
Overall quality of available housing for purchase in this area (N=108)	13	20.3	36	56.3	15	23.4	15	34.1	17	38.6	12	27.3
Overall quality of available housing for rental units in this area (N=110)	17	26.6	32	50.0	15	23.4	13	29.5	16	36.4	15	34.1

^{a/}Differences between Blacks and Whites were significant at .01 level.

Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

about the same number of Whites (29.5 percent) perceived the availability of low or moderate cost rental units to be a problem. Overall quality of available housing for purchase in this area was perceived to be a problem by 56.3 percent of the Blacks and 38.6 percent of the Whites. About the same percentages (50 percent of Blacks, 36.4 percent of Whites) of respondents rated the overall quality of available rental units as a problem.

Leaders. Since all but one of the leaders interviewed were Black, no analysis of results by race was made for this group. Almost all of the leaders (95.7 percent) believed that housing was a problem in the Black community. A majority (87 percent) also indicated that cost of housing was a problem. (See Table 5.) Availability of low or moderate cost housing for purchase or rent was perceived to be a problem by 91.3 percent of the leaders. Overall quality of available housing for purchase or rent was perceived to be a problem by 95.7 percent of the leaders.

Other housing issues examined included the ability to get home mortgage and home improvement loans. About equal percentages, 82.6 percent and 87 percent, respectively, of leaders responding to this survey indicated that ability to obtain home mortgage or home improvement loans was a problem.

In addition to rating the seriousness of the previously mentioned housing issues, leaders were asked open-ended questions regarding the most critical housing problem for members of the Black community, as well as other housing problems.

TABLE 5
LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOUSING ISSUES
(N=23)

	Not a		Problem		Don't	
	Problem		Problem		Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Housing in the Black community	1	4.3	22	95.7	0	0.0
Cost	2	8.7	20	87.0	1	4.3
Availability of low/moderate cost housing for purchase	2	8.7	21	91.3	0	0.0
Availability of low/moderate cost rental units	1	4.3	21	91.3	1	4.3
Overall quality of available housing for purchase	1	4.3	22	95.7	0	0.0
Overall quality of available rental units	1	4.3	22	95.7	0	0.0
Ability to get home mortgage loan	3	13.0	19	82.6	1	4.3
Ability to get home improvement loan	2	8.7	20	87.0	1	4.3

Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

The most often cited "critical housing problem" was affordable housing, followed by quality of housing. Both of these issues are interrelated, since newer higher quality housing is generally high priced. One leader, for example, commented that large families have difficulty finding available housing large enough to accommodate them comfortably. Other housing problems listed as most critical by one or two individuals included redlining, inadequate funding for housing, inadequate housing for families with children, the lack of options to buy housing in all locations, high utility costs, and low property values/low tax base in North Omaha.

When respondents were asked to list other housing problems in the Black community, a diversity of issues emerged. These included segregated housing patterns, sanitation or rodent problems, abandoned or vacant properties, density, and absentee landlords. One respondent also mentioned public housing projects as a problem, suggesting a better alternative would be direct subsidies to the poor that would allow them to choose where they wanted to live.

Education

Residents. The quality of elementary and secondary education in Omaha schools was rated as fair or good by the majority of both Black and White respondents. Similarly, 77.4 percent of Black and 69.7 percent of White respondents evaluated the opportunity for college education in Omaha to be fair or good. (See Table 6.) More respondents (81.3 percent of Blacks, 78.5 percent

TABLE 6

RESIDENT RESPONDENTS' RATINGS OF EDUCATION IN OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS^{a/}

	Blacks								Whites							
	Good		Fair		Poor		Don't Know		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Quality of elementary education (N=107)	30	47.6	19	30.2	4	6.3	10	15.9	23	52.3	10	22.7	4	9.1	7	15.9
Quality of high school education (N=105)	24	38.7	20	32.3	7	11.3	11	17.7	20	46.5	10	23.3	5	11.6	8	18.6
Opportunity for college education (N=105)	32	51.6	16	25.8	10	16.1	4	6.5	21	48.8	9	20.9	4	9.3	9	20.9
Opportunity for vocational education (N=101)	32	54.2	16	27.1	6	10.2	5	8.5	19	45.2	14	33.3	1	2.4	8	19.0
	Blacks				Whites											
	Not a Problem		Problem		Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%						
Location of public schools (N=108)			30	46.9	27	42.2	7	10.9	24	54.5	12	27.3	8	18.2		
Opportunity for input from parents to the school system (N=108)			27	42.2	26	40.6	11	17.2	18	40.9	12	27.3	14	31.8		
Quality of counseling in the high schools (N=106)			18	28.1	25	39.1	21	32.8	13	31.0	14	33.3	15	35.7		
Quality of counseling in the elementary schools (N=107)			21	33.3	23	36.5	19	30.2	13	29.5	12	27.3	19	43.2		
Parents' communication with teachers/administrators (N=107)			21	33.3	31	49.2	11	17.5	10	22.7	20	45.5	14	31.8		
Transfer of students for desegregation (N=108)			21	32.8	40	62.5	3	4.7	12	27.3	20	45.5	12	27.3		
	Blacks				Whites											
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Don't Know							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%						
Number of black teachers is adequate. ^{b/} (N=102)	11	17.5	42	66.7	10	15.9	17	43.6	14	35.9	8	20.5				

^{a/} Percentages were based on number of Blacks or Whites responding to each question, not the total N.

^{b/} Differences between Blacks and Whites were significant at .01 level.

of Whites) said the opportunity for vocational education was fair or good.

Residents were divided over the location of public schools, with 46.9 percent of Blacks and 54.5 percent of Whites reporting it was not a problem, and 42.2 percent of Blacks and 27.3 percent of Whites saying it was a problem. A similar evaluation was given to the opportunity for input from parents to the school system.

When asked about the quality of counseling in elementary and high schools, approximately one-third of the respondents said they did not know. Blacks were slightly more likely than Whites to indicate that this was a problem. While comparable percentages of the Black and White respondents (49.2 vs. 45.5 percent) perceived parents' communication with teachers and administrators to be a problem, more Blacks than Whites (62.5 percent vs. 45.5 percent) said the transfer of students for desegregation was a problem. A significant difference between Blacks and Whites appeared only in response to the question, "Do you think the number of Black teachers in the public school system is adequate?" While 66.7 percent of Blacks replied, "No," only 35.9 percent of Whites replied negatively to this item.

Leaders. Leaders' perceptions of educational issues differed greatly from those of the residents. Consensus existed among leaders that education for members of the Black community was a problem with 91.3 percent indicating they felt it was. (See Table 7.) In contrast to the residents, a majority (73.9

TABLE 7
LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION ISSUES
(N=23)

	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Education for members of the Black community	2	8.7	21	91.3	0	0.0
The quality of elementary education	3	13.0	17	73.9	3	13.0
The quality of high school education	5	21.7	17	73.9	1	4.3
The opportunity for college education	3	13.0	20	87.0	0	0.0
The opportunity for vocational education (N=22)	5	22.7	15	68.2	2	9.1

Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

percent) of leaders rated the quality of elementary and high school education as a problem. Opportunity for college education was seen as a problem by more (87 percent) of the leaders than was opportunity for vocational education (68.2 percent).

Leaders were also asked an open-ended question, "What do you think are the major obstacles that Black teens must overcome to complete high school?" Among those most often mentioned responses were the home environment, peer pressure, drugs or alcohol, and the lack of successful Black role models. Other obstacles related to individuals included problems with self-esteem and motivation, finances, and teen pregnancy. However, some leaders pointed to problems of an institutional nature, such as institutional racism, prejudiced attitudes of some faculty and administrators, inadequate counseling, and inadequate emphasis on teaching children the basics in public elementary and high schools. The need for tutorial assistance and for movement away from a perceived complacency regarding the value of education were also cited.

In addition, leaders were asked to suggest possible solutions to these problems. These suggested solutions were quite diverse but included many valuable ideas that may be useful to the Urban League.

For example, a number of leaders saw the need for a learning center or program in the Black community that would provide tutorial assistance, educational programs, and/or counseling to youths. For example, one person suggested the establishment of

learning centers by agencies in the Black community in cooperation with public and private schools. One person expressed the view that the Urban League should serve as an advocate for health and education in the Black community. The need for public service announcements to increase awareness of available services was mentioned by one person.

Other leaders made suggestions related to the schools, such as the need for training teachers to be more sensitive, providing more extracurricular activities, and including more Blacks on the school board. One leader also addressed the issue of faculty salaries, suggesting that all teachers receive salary increases, and teachers in predominately Black areas be provided additional pay for additional work that may be required.

Other suggestions included the need for the community to provide adequate role models for young people and the need for development of a positive peer culture. In regard to the need for role models, one person suggested efforts by community agencies to enlist successful Blacks to have "one on one" contact with young people. Another leader suggested that schools and universities bring in people who have been successful in breaking "the cycle of poverty" in their own lives to talk with students.

Leaders indicated a number of obstacles that Blacks who pursue college or vocational education face. The majority of leaders mentioned the lack of finances and scholarships. The lack of a good high school education and the lack of adequate preparation for college were the second most often mentioned.

Several leaders also cited the low motivation of some students. One leader, for example, said that both motivation and a support system are needed. He stressed the need "...to understand the value of education. A person who wants to go to college can, if he has drive."

Another leader expressed concern that academic excellence was under-rewarded in the community compared to athletic achievements.

Other obstacles mentioned by at least one leader included poor counseling and lack of information regarding scholarships, lack of employment, institutional racism, sexism, and entry standards at colleges and schools. One person cited the need for proper career identification. According to this leader, too many youths go into "dying areas" rather than where better job opportunities exist.

A variety of possible solutions to these problems were suggested. The most often mentioned was additional scholarships for Blacks. The need to motivate students and effective school counseling were the next most often mentioned. Also cited as solutions were increasing federal spending on education, encouraging youths to apply for scholarships, and upgrading academic standards in schools. One leader emphasized the need for parents to provide skills and stimulation for learning. Again, as in previous questions, the importance of role models and programs that reward achievers were mentioned. One leader, for example, cited the need for more Blacks and females

in "key positions" at colleges and universities to serve as role models.

A couple of leaders gave specific suggestions regarding agencies and organizations such as the Urban League. For example, one person suggested that the Urban League develop support organizations on campuses to assist Black students in developing a network of persons to advise them in college and preparation for jobs. Another leader suggested that agencies provide educational classes for families in such important areas as budgeting and child-parent relations. Yet another leader expressed the view that because some parents are necessarily preoccupied with problems of survival, community resources rather than parental ones must be depended on to assist Blacks pursuing post-secondary education. "More organizations and agencies should become involved in scholarship programs..." and "Black support groups for tutoring..." were suggested by yet another leader.

Recreation

Residents. Recreation needs of the Black community as rated by residents are shown in Table 8. The most frequently mentioned recreation need was sport facilities for youths mentioned by 33 percent. Parks were most often mentioned (by 31.4 percent) as an existing recreation facility that was in need of improvement. Finally, residents were asked to list the most important type of recreation needed in this area. No real consensus emerged on this item, although the most often cited area was organized activities for pre-teen children.

TABLE 8
RECREATION NEEDS (RESIDENTS)

	Number	Percent
Types of recreation that need to be developed ^{a/}		
Sports facilities for youths (N=106)	35	33.0
Organized activities for pre-teen children (N=106)	29	27.4
Parks (N=106)	28	26.4
Organized activities for teens (N=107)	28	26.2
Sports facilities for adults (N=109)	23	21.1
Theaters (N=107)	21	19.6
Restaurants (N=106)	18	17.0
Other (N=107)	17	15.9
Existing recreation facilities in need of improvement ^{a/} (N=69 unless otherwise noted)		
Sports facilities for youths (N=106)	29	27.4
Organized activities for pre-teen children (N=106)	26	24.5
Parks (N=105)	33	31.4
Organized activities for teens (N=106)	24	22.6
Sports facilities for adults (N=106)	18	17.0
Theaters (N=107)	14	13.1
Restaurants (N=107)	18	16.8
Other	7	6.7
The most important type of recreation needed in this area (N=95)		
Sports facilities for youths	8	8.4
Organized activities for pre-teen children	17	17.9
Parks	12	12.6
Organized activities for teens	8	8.4
Sports facilities for adults	9	9.5
Theaters	6	6.3
Restaurants	7	7.4
Other	11	11.6
Don't know	17	17.9

^{a/} Multiple responses were possible on these questions. Thus, totals exceed 100%.

Leaders. Leaders' perceptions of recreation issues in the Black community are shown in Table 9. Most (78.3 percent) leaders rated recreation as as a problem.

Leaders were also asked, "What types of recreation do you think are currently lacking and need to be developed?" The category of recreation most often cited spontaneously by leaders was sports facilities for youths, mentioned by 56.5 percent. Over 39 percent cited both organized activities for pre-teens and for teens. Theaters and sports facilities for adults were named by 26.1 percent.

To distinguish between needs in regard to developing new recreation and improving existing facilities, leaders were also asked, "Which of the recreation facilities we now have need improving?" In response to this question, 40 percent mentioned sports facilities for youths, and 30 percent mentioned both organized activities for pre-teens and teens. One-fourth said they thought parks needed improving, and 20 percent said sports facilities for adults needed improving.

A lack of consensus existed among leaders regarding which of the many recreation needs was the most important. The most often mentioned was organized activities for pre-teen children, mentioned by 27.3 percent. (See Table 9.)

Public Services

Residents. Street and sewer maintenance was the public service that most residents (86.2 percent of Blacks; 70.5 percent of Whites) said was in need of improvement, followed by weed

TABLE 9

LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF RECREATION ISSUES
(N=23)

	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Recreation in the Black community	5	21.7	18	78.3	0	0.0
Yes						
No. %						
Types of recreation that need to be developed ^{a/}						
Sports facilities for youths					13	56.5
Organized activities for pre-teen children					9	39.1
Organized activities for teens					9	39.1
Sports facilities for adults					6	26.1
Theaters					6	26.1
Restaurants					4	18.2
Parks					2	8.7
Other					4	17.4
Existing recreation facilities in need of improving ^{a/}						
Sports facilities for youths					8	40.0
Organized activities for pre-teens					6	30.0
Organized activities for teens					6	30.0
Sports facilities for adults					4	20.0
Theaters					1	5.0
Restaurants					1	5.0
Parks					5	25.0
Other					3	15.0
The most important type of recreation needed in the Black community						
Sports facilities for youths					4	18.2
Organized activities for pre-teen children					6	27.3
Organized activities for teens					1	4.5
Sports facilities for adults					2	9.1
Theaters					1	4.5
Restaurants					1	4.5
Parks					1	4.5
Other					6	27.3

^{a/}Multiple responses were possible for these questions. Thus, percentages exceed 100 percent.

control, with 70.3 and 40.9 percent, respectively. Police protection was reported as needing improvement by 65.6 percent of Blacks but only 36.4 percent of Whites, which was a significant difference. (See Table 10.) More Blacks (over 56.9 percent) than Whites (43.2 percent) said city services were conveniently located. About equal numbers of Blacks and Whites indicated that county services were conveniently located. Blacks were about equally divided in evaluating access to health clinics in the area as a problem or not a problem, while Whites were somewhat less likely to perceive this as a problem.

When asked to indicate which public service was most in need of improvement, both Blacks and Whites most frequently mentioned street and sewer maintenance. Among Blacks, police protection tied with street and sewer maintenance as being most in need of improvement.

Leaders. Public services in the Black community were rated as a problem by most (78.3 percent) leaders. (See Table 11.) Agreement was unanimous that street and sewer maintenance needed improvement. Almost everyone (95.7 percent) also agreed that weed control needed improvement. The third most often cited service in need of improvement was police protection, mentioned by 91.3 percent. The need for transportation services improvement was apparent with 78.3 percent mentioning it. Leaders were about evenly divided on the questions related to convenience of city and county services.

TABLE 10
RESIDENT RESPONDENTS' EVALUATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES^{a/}

	Blacks						Whites					
	Yes		No		Don't Know		Yes		No		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Which public services need improvement in this area?												
Street/sewer maintenance (N=109)	56	86.2	9	13.8	0	0.0	31	70.5	10	22.7	3	6.8
Weed control (N=108) ^{b/}	45	70.3	16	25.0	3	4.7	18	40.9	19	43.2	7	15.9
Police protection (N=108) ^{c/}	42	65.6	20	31.3	2	3.1	16	36.4	26	59.1	2	4.5
Transportation service (bus, taxi, delivery) (N=108)	25	39.1	39	60.9	0	0.0	14	31.8	27	61.4	3	6.8
Fire protection (N=108)	17	26.6	44	68.8	3	4.7	4	9.1	34	77.3	6	13.6
Garbage collection (N=108)	13	20.3	51	79.7	0	0.0	6	13.6	35	79.5	3	6.8
Are city services conveniently located? (N=109)												
	37	56.9	24	36.9	4	6.2	19	43.2	16	36.4	9	20.5
Are county services conveniently located? (N=109)												
	38	58.5	24	36.9	3	4.6	26	59.1	14	31.8	4	9.1
	Blacks						Whites					
	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know		Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Is access to health clinics in this area (N=108)												
	28	43.8	30	46.9	6	9.4	26	59.1	13	29.5	5	11.4
	Blacks						Whites					
	No.		%		No.		%		No.		%	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Public service most in need of improvement in this area (N=106)												
Police protection			23	35.9			11	26.2				
Fire protection			0	0.0			1	2.4				
Street/sewer maintenance			23	35.9			18	42.9				
Garbage collection			0	0.0			2	4.8				
Weed control			14	21.9			6	14.3				
Bus service			3	4.7			4	9.5				
Don't know			1	1.6			0	0.0				

^{a/} Percentages were based on number of Blacks or Whites responding to each question, not the total N.

^{b/} Differences between Blacks and Whites were significant at .05 level.

^{c/} Differences between Blacks and Whites were significant at .01 level.

Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 11
LEADERS' EVALUATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES
(N=23)

	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Public services in the Black community	5	21.7	18	78.3	0	0.0
	Yes		No		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Which types of public services need improvement? ^{a/}						
Street/sewer maintenance	23	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Weed control	22	95.7	1	4.3	0	0.0
Police protection	21	91.3	2	8.7	0	0.0
Garbage collection	9	39.1	10	43.5	4	17.4
Fire protection	7	30.4	15	65.2	1	4.3
Transportation service (bus, taxi, delivery)	18	78.3	5	21.7	0	0.0
Are city services conveniently located? (e.g., public utilities)	10	43.5	13	56.5	0	0.0
Are county services conveniently located? (e.g., court)	11	47.8	12	52.2	0	0.0
			No.	%		
Most important public service need in Black community						
Police protection			11	47.8		
Street/sewer maintenance			6	26.1		
Other			6	26.1		

^{a/} Multiple responses were possible for these questions. Thus, percentages exceed 100 percent.

When respondents were asked to designate the one most important public service need, the most often mentioned (by 47.8 percent) was police protection. Over one-fourth (26.1 percent) mentioned street and sewer maintenance.

Health Care¹

Leaders were also asked for their opinions on various health care issues in the Black community. (See Table 12.) In general, health care for members of the Black community was perceived as a problem by 95.7 percent of the leaders responding to this survey. (See Table 12.) Agreement was unanimous that costs of medical and hospital services were a problem. While availability and accessibility of health care were not as widely perceived to be problematic as was cost, a majority of leaders (73.9 percent and 87 percent, respectively) rated these as a problem. Leaders were divided regarding the overall quality of health care, with 43.5 percent stating that it was not a problem and 47.8 percent saying it was.

As a follow-up to the above questions, leaders were asked to offer suggestions regarding how health care in the Black community could be improved. The responses given were quite varied. While over one-half the leaders mentioned the need for additional health care facilities in the Black community, individuals differed in regard to the specific type of facility,

¹Health care questions were not included in the residents' questionnaires because of the availability of these data in a study by Ginger Burch, Assessment of the Primary Health Care Needs of North and South Omaha, Omaha: Center for Applied Urban Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha, October, 1981.

TABLE 12
 LEADERS' EVALUATION OF HEALTH CARE
 IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY
 (N=23)

	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Health care for members of the Black community	1	4.3	22	95.7		
Costs of medical/hospital services	0	0.0	23	100.0		
Availability of health care	6	26.1	17	73.9		
Accessibility of health care	3	13.0	20	87.0		
Overall quality of health care (N=21)	10	43.5	11	47.8	2	8.7

e.g., dentists, clinics, pharmacies, medical, or holistic health centers. One person cited the need for cooperative planning among health care facilities, and another saw the need to eliminate excess health care facilities in the metropolitan area. Other suggestions made by at least one person included the need for more Blacks in the medical field and more Black participation on advisory committees, federal subsidies for health care, and lower medical costs. One leader emphasized the association between improved job opportunities and health care. With jobs, he commented, come health insurance benefits and financial resources to enable people better to afford health care. One leader commented on the need for seminars to educate the public

Administration of Justice

Residents. Two-thirds or more of both Black and White residents perceived crime to be a somewhat or very serious problem. (See Table 13.) Over one-half (55.4 percent) of the Blacks compared to 36.4 percent of the Whites rated police protection as a problem. Attitudes of law enforcement officers assigned to North Omaha was perceived to be a problem by 49.2 percent of Blacks compared to 27.3 percent of Whites, and police/community relations by 46.2 and 36.4 percent, respectively. Significant differences by race appeared regarding the seriousness of crime of Blacks against Blacks. Among Blacks, 84.6 percent said crime involving Blacks against Blacks was a problem; this compared with

TABLE 13
 RESIDENT RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
 ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE ISSUES
 (N=109 unless otherwise noted)

	Blacks						Whites					
	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know		Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Crime or personal safety	19	29.2	46	70.8	0	0.0	12	27.3	29	65.9	3	6.8
Police protection	29	44.6	36	55.4	0	0.0	24	54.5	16	36.4	4	9.1
Attitudes of law enforcement officers assigned to North Omaha	22	33.8	32	49.2	11	16.9	23	52.3	12	27.3	9	20.5
Police/community relations	23	35.4	30	46.2	12	18.5	15	34.1	16	36.4	13	29.5
Crime involving Blacks against Blacks (N=108) ^{a/}	5	7.7	55	84.6	5	7.7	6	14.0	16	37.2	21	48.8

	Blacks						Whites					
	Yes		No		Don't Know		Yes		No		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you think career opportunities for Blacks in law enforcement are adequate? (N=108) ^{a/}	14	21.5	44	67.7	7	10.8	8	41.9	14	32.6	11	25.6

^{a/} Differences between Blacks and Whites were significant at .01 level.

only 37.2 percent of the Whites. Over two-thirds (67.7 percent) of Blacks and 32.6 percent of Whites did not think career opportunities for Blacks in law enforcement were adequate.

Leaders. All of the leaders indicated that crime was a problem in the Black community. All but one responded that police protection was a problem, and all but two characterized police/community relations as a problem. In fact, several leaders commented that good police/community relations in the Black community were "almost non-existent." These data may be found in Table 14.

Some leaders perceived Omaha Police to be lax in enforcement of the laws in the Black community compared to other areas of the city. For example, one leader was critical of what he termed a "lackadaisical" approach to crime problems on 24th Street compared to the concerted effort to stop problems that occurred along West Dodge in the last year.

Comments regarding police/community relations were primarily negative. Inadequate police training, lack of police understanding of Blacks, failure to respond quickly to crime, and unequal enforcement of laws were cited as negatives about the police. Several leaders commented on the distrust felt by Blacks toward police. Disagreement was found about the value of the beat patrol, with one person speaking for it and another against.

On the positive side, several leaders commented that the police were doing some things right and were trying to improve their image and accessibility.

TABLE 14
LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE ISSUES
(N=23)

	Not a Problem		Problem	
	No.	%	No.	%
Crime/safety	0	0.0	23	100.0
Police protection in the Black community	1	4.3	22	95.6
Police/community relations	2	8.7	21	91.3

Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

In response to the question regarding the most critical crime safety need in the Black community, a variety of responses were given. The most often mentioned included giving greater police attention to major crimes and equal attention to crimes against Blacks and against Whites.

In addition to identifying crime related problems in the community, ideas were sought on ways that the Black community could work to reduce crime. Most leaders suggested a neighborhood watch program. One person qualified this recommendation however, commenting that the establishment of a neighborhood watch program would be more feasible if the Black community had greater economic security.

Other suggestions included cooperation and communication with police, reporting crimes, and stiffer sentencing.

A variety of responses were also given to the question about how the administration of laws in the courts could be improved. Several leaders listed equal sentencing, fairer judges, and more minority judges as needed. Other suggestions included channels for reporting grievances against police, reducing the lag time in getting cases to court, wider use of probation, removal of institutional racism, and education of citizens regarding their responsibilities.

Employment

Residents. Existing state and private employment services were seen as a problem by 45.9 percent and 37.9 percent, respectively. (See Table 15.) However, 35.8 to 57.4 percent of

TABLE 15
 RESIDENT RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT ISSUES
 (N=109)

	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Existing state employment services	20	18.3	50	45.9	39	35.8
Existing private employment services	5	4.6	41	37.9	62	57.4

	Yes		No		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
State employment services are effective in placing Blacks	21	19.3	46	42.2	42	38.5
Private employment services are effective in placing Blacks	15	14.0	40	37.4	52	48.6

the respondents said they did not know the answers to those items. Similarly, sizeable percentages of the residents responded "don't know" when asked if state and private employment services are effective in placing Blacks. Only 19.3 and 14 percent, respectively, indicated that state and private employment services are effective in placing Blacks.

Leaders. As shown in Table 16, all of the leaders rated unemployment as a problem, and 85.7 percent said that existing employment services were not effective in placing Blacks.

The state job service was the most often mentioned means by which Blacks find jobs, followed by the want ads, word of mouth, and private employment agencies. Two leaders cited community agencies as important.

Leaders were also asked how employment opportunities for members of the Black community could be improved. Again, the responses were as diverse as the leaders. Several persons mentioned the need for commitment of local businesses to hire minorities. One leader, for example, suggested a "more concentrated commitment from major businesses" at the local level, not just the national level. Others mentioned the need for Blacks to have upgraded skills and better education. Job training and placement programs were also cited. While some persons emphasized the need to improve education and skills, others focused on what they perceived to be a need to create or attract jobs that match the existing skills of members of the community. As one leader said, "The Black community cannot sit back and wait

TABLE 16

LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT ISSUES
(N=23)

	Not a Problem		Problem		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Unemployment in Black community	0	0.0	23	100.0	9	0.0

	Yes		No		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Are existing employment services effective in placing Blacks in jobs?	2	9.5	18	85.7	1	4.8

for the Chamber of Commerce to find jobs for Blacks." Indeed, this person suggested the creation of a Black Chamber of Commerce to focus on employment needs.

Major Needs

Finally, residents and leaders were asked to mention the three major needs of the Omaha Black community. (See Table 17.) This question was open-ended in order to obtain spontaneous responses. Since the question was placed toward the end of the questionnaire, however, the preceding questions on areas such as education, recreation, etc., probably influenced the respondents' comments. As can be seen from Table 17, employment, police protection, and housing emerged as the major needs. The need for recreation was included by over 20 percent of the respondents. A large number of respondents also included responses that were both unique to them and otherwise unclassifiable. For example, one person mentioned the North Freeway as a problem; others mentioned the need for facilities for the elderly, transportation, effective leadership and representation, and building improvements.

Leaders responded to this question with somewhat greater consensus. Jobs and education emerged as two of the major needs of the Omaha Black community, mentioned by 73.9 percent and 65.2 percent of the leaders, respectively. Housing was the third major need, mentioned by 47.8 percent. (See Table 18.)

TABLE 17
 RESIDENT RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF MAJOR NEEDS
 OF OMAHA BLACK COMMUNITY
 (N=93)

	Number	Percent
Employment	37	39.8
Police protection	30	32.3
Housing	24	25.8
Street and sewer maintenance	21	22.6
Recreation	19	20.4
Education	13	14.0
Pride and upkeep of community	11	11.8
Health care	10	10.8
Communication	9	9.7
Other ^{a/}	43	46.2

^{a/} This category includes unrelated and otherwise unclassifiable responses, each mentioned by only 1 person.

Multiple responses were possible. Thus, percentages exceed 100 percent.

TABLE 18
 LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF MAJOR NEEDS
 OF OMAHA BLACK COMMUNITY

	Number ^{a/}	Percent
Employment	17	73.9
Education	15	65.2
Housing	11	47.8
Safety/police-community relations	5	21.7
Economic development	5	21.7
Health	4	17.4
Other	10	43.5

^{a/} Multiple responses were possible. Thus, the total exceeds 100 percent.

Conclusion

According to the respondents to this survey, employment, housing, police protection, and education are the major needs of the Black community.

All of the leaders rated unemployment as a problem, and 85.7 percent said existing unemployment services were not effective in placing Blacks. While some persons emphasized the need to improve education and skills, others focused on what they perceived to be a need for greater commitment of local businesses to hire minorities or the need to create and attract jobs which match the existing skills of community members.

Among residents, only 19.3 percent of Blacks and 14 percent of Whites indicated that state and private employment services are effective in placing Blacks.

On education issues, some differences appeared between leaders and residents. For example, the majority of both Black and White residents rated the quality of elementary and secondary education in Omaha, as well as the opportunity for college and vocational education as fair or good. However, a majority of the leaders rated these items as a problem in the Black community.

Leaders cited a number of obstacles that Black teens must overcome to complete high school. These included the home environment, peer pressure, drugs or alcohol, and a lack of successful Black role models. Suggestions for overcoming these obstacles were diverse but included the establishment of a learning center or program in the Black community that would

provide tutorial and counseling services. Also recommended were efforts by community agencies to enlist successful Blacks for one on one contact with young people.

Leaders cited the lack of finances and scholarships and inadequate high school preparation as major obstacles to Blacks' pursuit of college or vocational education.

Differences also appeared between Blacks and Whites on some issues. Blacks were somewhat more likely than Whites to say that the transfer of students for desegregation was a problem. Also, Blacks were significantly more likely than Whites to perceive the number of Black teachers in the public school system to be inadequate.

Leaders showed greater consensus than residents regarding housing issues. Almost all of the leaders (95.7 percent) believed housing was a problem in the Black community. They expressed concern for availability of low or moderate cost housing, overall quality of housing, and ability of Blacks to get home mortgage and improvement loans.

Among residents, Blacks were more likely than Whites to express a concern about the availability of low or moderate priced housing for purchase in their area. While over one-half (51.6 percent) of the Blacks rated this as a problem, significantly fewer Whites (25.6 percent) did so.

Somewhat fewer Blacks (41.3 percent) perceived the availability of low or moderate cost rental units to be a problem. Overall quality of available housing and rental units was rated

as a problem by half or more of the Blacks and over a third of the Whites.

Consensus on crime as a problem was generally evident, with two-thirds or more of both Black and White residents and all the leaders perceiving it as a problem. While less than one-half of the residents perceived police/community relations to be a problem, all but two of the leaders did.

Significant differences by race appeared regarding the seriousness of crime of Blacks against Blacks with more Blacks perceiving this to be a problem. Somewhat more Blacks than Whites thought that career opportunities for Blacks in law enforcement were inadequate.

Leaders suggested that police give greater attention to major crimes and equal attention to crimes against Blacks and against Whites. In addition, most leaders suggested a neighborhood watch program as a means of reducing crime.

Residents expressed concern with street and sewer maintenance, with over 22.6 percent listing this as a major need in the Black community. Street and sewer maintenance, weed control, and police protection were the most often mentioned public services in need of improvement by residents and leaders. However, a significant difference appeared among Black residents and White residents on the need for improved weed control and police protection, with Blacks mentioning both more often than Whites.

Most leaders rated recreation as a problem. Sports facilities for youths were most often cited as needing to be developed or improved. The most often mentioned recreation needs by residents were sports facilities for youths. Parks were seen as the existing facilities most in need of improvement.

Over 95 percent of the leaders perceived health care in general as a problem, and all the leaders agreed that costs of medical and hospital services were a problem.