

CSA #2 – Alief/Sharpstown Executive Summary

Demographics:

The Alief/Sharpstown area, located on the southwest side of Houston, is among the most ethnically diverse in the Houston area. 35% of the population is Hispanic, with the remainder of the population consisting of roughly equal proportions of African Americans, Anglos, and Asians. The median household income is about two-thirds that of Greater Houston. The median home value is slightly less than that of the Greater Houston area. The area is roughly about as educated as Houston as a whole. Just over a quarter of the adult population has no high school diploma, and about 20% have a college degree. Most households consist of married couples with children; however, nearly 18% of families are single mothers.

Satisfaction levels:

Compared to the rest of Houston, the residents of the Alief/Sharpstown area reported lower than average levels of satisfaction with their lives. Only 32% of residents reported a great deal of satisfaction with their neighborhoods, sixth lowest among all CSAs. 71% reported high levels of satisfaction with their families, and 56% reported high levels of satisfaction with their friends. Only 28% of adults successfully manage the demands of their careers and families, and only 43% of residents reported being happy with their lives as a whole.

Spiritual Condition:

Relative to the rest of Greater Houston, residents of Alief/Sharpstown are much more spiritually receptive than other CSAs in the Greater Houston area. The CSA ranks near the middle or top of nearly all spiritual categories. 35% of residents attend church weekly, and 13% of residents never attend church. Both values are consistent with the rest of the city. When having problems, 44% would be likely to see a religious counselor, and 35% would seek help in a place of worship. However, the community is much more spiritually aware than these statistics would indicate. Nearly 76% of residents are likely to read the Bible or other inspired literature when they have problems. Likewise, 92% of residents are likely to pray when they have problems, and 78% of residents have no doubts about the existence of God.

Interviews with Key Leaders in the Alief/Sharpstown CSA:

Key leaders praised the area for its accessible location, affordable housing, and multicultural population. Most of the problems facing the community are related to youth issues: Gang violence, broken families, and difficulties integrating immigrants into the community were among the major problems discussed. Community leaders also commented on a general lack of ambition among youth within the community. Part of this perception is due to a high number of high school dropouts who leave to find work and help at home financially. The Catholic Church is perceived as being very actively involved in meeting the needs of those within the community. However, a major criticism of the Church as a whole was a general lack of visible (as opposed to financial) support. Leaders commented that congregations could help to solve problems within the community by offering mentoring programs to help mend family relationships and minister to the youth.

