



## St. Louis Equal Housing & Community Reinvestment Alliance

### Report to the Community Executive Summary

The St. Louis Equal Housing and Community Reinvestment Alliance (SLEHCRA) is a coalition working to increase investment in minority communities, regardless of income, and in low- and moderate-income communities, regardless of race, as required by the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) and fair lending laws.

SLEHCRA does this by conducting analysis of banks' CRA activities, writing public comment letters to be considered by federal regulators in CRA evaluations and applications, and engaging in dialogues with banks about their performance in providing services to all parts of our community. Since 2009, SLEHCRA has evaluated the performance of 42 banks operating in the St. Louis region and has written 38 public comment letters, including the first public comment letter ever to be received by the St. Louis field office of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

SLEHCRA's work and collaboration with banks has led to banks investing more in underserved communities in St. Louis, including the following commitments:

- \$14.5 million has been committed by banks for community development activities.
- Three new bank branches are opening in Pagedale, Olivette, and Jennings.
- Banks have created 11 new banking products, including the development of 7 new deposit products like second-chance checking accounts, 8 new affordable mortgage products, and 4 additional products such as small dollar loans and credit-building products.
- Financial education resources and partnerships have increased with banks committing \$550,000 in increased financial education and participating in more events with community organizations.
- Banks have increased outreach to low-income communities and predominately minority communities with \$660,000 committed to increasing marketing and advertising, particularly to African-American and Hispanic communities.
- Increased diversity and community development within bank staff and directors, including more than 16 new positions created for CRA and Community Development, six banks increasing diversity among bank employees, and three banks adding members to their board of directors.
- More banks have developed significant partnerships with nonprofits and community organizations, providing financial support and investments, financial education resources, and partnership programs.

This increased accountability for bank performance by SLEHCRA has also contributed to federal regulatory agencies increasing their enforcement of CRA and fair lending laws. Two banks have received 'Needs to Improve' CRA ratings, the first below satisfactory CRA rating for an institution based in St. Louis since 1994. Six banks have revised their CRA service area to include more low- and moderate-income areas and areas with predominately minority population. Both the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have investigated and resolved fair lending cases originating from SLEHCRA's work. Following two letters from SLEHCRA, the U.S. Treasury increased oversight of those two banks under the bailout program by appointing members to the board of directors, the first of such action by the U.S. Treasury.

More than ever, financial institutions are stepping up to help strengthen our communities and provide families with access to opportunities. SLEHCRA is committed to continue this work by partnering with financial institutions, regulators, and community partners to together move forward towards a stronger shared community.