

Community Investments Volume 17, Issue 1 CI Notebook

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Nine diverse states. Nearly one and a half million square miles of land mass. More than 55 million people. The Federal Reserve's Twelfth District has a dizzying array of community development issues and an equally-overwhelming number of players in the industry. How does a community development professional charged with addressing the needs in even a portion of this territory set priorities?

This is the ongoing challenge we at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco have faced for many years. Given the vast and ever-changing needs in low- and moderate-income communities, we decided we needed to be much more methodical in our approach to understanding the issues and setting our priorities. This led to the production of individual "environmental assessments" for each of our nine district states.

For each state, we have conducted an environmental scan by looking at the demographic, economic, governmental, and financial context through the community development lens. In addition, each report provides detail on the specific needs and resources in each state for four important community development areas: affordable housing, small business, poverty and asset accumulation, and issues specifically affecting native people and immigrants.

We are pleased to publish all nine environmental assessments in conjunction with this issue of Community Investments, which itself contains both an overview article on the information gathered and a separate pull-out section containing two-page summaries of the major findings for each state. Please take the time to go to our website and print out the individual reports for the states you're interested in.

We hope you find these reports useful, and look forward to working together to address the many community development needs of our district that are detailed in these reports.

All the best to you and your families in this New Year.