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FOR IMMEDIATELY RELEASE
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The Community Counselor Training Program of the Urban League's Consumer Affairs Office has proven most successful in its first two (2) months, according to Ronna Magy, supervisor of the Consumer Affairs Counseling Unit.

Five (5) trainees, selected from the Model Cities eligibility list, began their intensive programs of lectures and on-the-job training late September. Since then, the Community Counselors have helped organize a Consumer Protection Council in Model Cities Area #3 (the largest area, extending from Highway 94 to Wabash Ave. and from 28th St. to Main), as well as worked with the Consumer Affairs Counseling staff on the day-to-day activities of counseling, community organization and consumer education.

The trainees are Mrs. Mabel Turner, Mrs. Rhonda Hunt, Mrs. Jean Cottingham, Miss Belinda Grier and Miss Yvonne Washington----- all residents of the Model Cities Neighborhood.

As part of their training program, the Community Counselors met with representatives of the Health Department, Planned Parenthood and the State Department of Consumer Affairs. They also have gone into indepth analysis of community organization and counseling, as it relates to the Consumer Affairs Office. Much information was shared by trainees and counselors during work sessions.

The Consumer Affairs Office, located at 3802 National Avenue, provides counseling, research and consumer education programs to the community.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

ADD 1

Its hot-line (263-6145) is open Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Part of the Consumer Affairs staff deals with complaints, such as those received on the hot-line. The staff offers technical assistance and advice on how to resolve the problem. The Counseling Unit, of which the trainees are a part, is concerned with basic problem solving, i.e. it seeks to assist Model Cities residents in solving common consumer problems such as landlord-tenant relationships, police protection, housing conditions, environmental conditions, contract signing, and others.

In its first five (5) months, Consumer Affairs has resolved 527 complaints and saved consumers about $44,000 through direct refunds or cancellations of faulty contracts. The office receives about 200 complaints a month.

One of the most outstanding successes of Consumer Affairs was in aiding in the formation of a housing committee of the Model Cities Physical Task Force. The trainees and Consumer Affairs staff provided technical information and counseling to the Consumer Protection Council of Model Cities Area #4, a citizens group that was greatly alarmed at the conditions of new, low-cost housing being built in the community. Two weeks ago, the Consumer Protection Council, chaired by Albert McCain, went before the Physical Task Force with a detailed report and slides demonstrating the nature of construction under the Federally-funded 235 Housing Program in Southeast San Diego.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

ADD 2

The Consumer Protection Council asked for assistance in handling the problem, and the Physical Task Force came up with the following six-point program:

1. Standards for housing will be established with the aid of technical assistance (an independent, professional architect) selected by the Physical Task Force and paid through Model Cities Funds.

2. Technical assistance will be used to develop a plan to provide pre-purchase advice to potential buyers of low-cost housing in the Model Cities Neighborhood.

3. A standing Physical Task Force Housing Committee will be set up to work idrectly with the Consumer Affairs Office to monitor and evaluate housing built in the Model Neighborhood.

4. A firm committment will be made by the Physical Task Force that no housing be built without Physical Task Force approval and without meeting Physical Task Force standards. Technical Assistance will be used to determine these standards, which include site location, density, asthetic quality, electrical and plumbing plans, etc. (This is in line with the Model Cities goal of improving the quality of life in the Model Neighborhood).

5. A consumer education program for new home owners will be established.

6. A monitoring program will be established by staff and the technical assistant for all housing that has been and will be built in the Model Neighborhood.