

Palm Springs Section 14: Survivors of Displacement



Overview: On November 15th, 2024, the City of Palm Springs in California approved a \$5.9 million reparations settlement to compensate the survivors and descendants of families forcibly evicted from Section 14. Between the 1950s and 1960s, the City of Palm Springs orchestrated the forced removal and destruction of a predominantly African-American and Mexican-American neighborhood to make way for commercial developments.

Background: In the early 20th century, Palm Springs implemented racially restrictive housing policies. This barred Black and Brown residents from renting or owning homes in white neighborhoods and forced them to live in Section 14, a 640-acre tract of land owned by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. Its affordable leasing made it one of the few places where working-class African-Americans and immigrants from Mexico and Latin America could live amid widespread housing segregation. Residents built a thriving community with homes, businesses, and cultural institutions. At its peak, it was estimated there were over 1,000 structures and several thousand residents living there. Due to its proximity to downtown, the area became a target for redevelopment initiatives in the mid-20th century. Palm Springs city officials labeled the neighborhood a "blight," perpetuating racist narratives that justified its destruction. The city sought to replace the community with resorts and luxury developments, framing the displacement as urban renewal.

Forced Eviction: Between the 1950s and 1960s, the City of Palm Springs orchestrated one of the most egregious examples of forced eviction in modern history. Under the guise of "urban renewal," city officials refused to renew leases, denied basic utilities, burned homes, and bulldozed entire blocks, often without adequate notice or compensation. Hundreds of families were displaced without adequate compensation or support, disrupting lives and severing community ties. These families lost not only their homes but their sense of community, cultural identity, and the opportunity to build generational wealth. The displacement further entrenched racial inequities, leaving many to live in substandard housing or experience long-term financial hardship.

Legacy: The thousands of survivors and descendants have fought for decades to receive compensation for being violently displaced from their neighborhood by the city. Represented by civil rights attorney Areva Martin and economist Dr. Julianne Malveaux, they have demanded reparations for what the [California Attorney General's office described in a 1965 Memorandum as a "City-engineered holocaust."](#) The City of Palms Springs formally apologized in 2021, and in 2024, the [Palm Springs City Council unanimously approved the settlement](#) of \$5.9 million. Survivors and descendants will receive direct financial payments, marking a step toward justice for a community long denied its rightful restitution.

Source:

Palm Springs Section 14 Survivors. "History of Section 14 and Palm Springs.."

[<https://section14survivors.com/about-us/>](https://section14survivors.com/about-us/)

