

FAIR HOUSING OF MARIN ANNUAL REPORT: FISCAL YEAR 2013-14

Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, Fair Housing of Marin fielded a total of 975 inquiries from tenants, homeowners, social service providers, and advocates across Marin, Sonoma, and Solano counties. Twenty-seven percent of FHOM's clients were Latino; nearly 13% of clients spoke no English. Eleven percent of clients were Black / African-American. More than four out of every five inquiries lodged were in regard to rental properties. Of these inquiries, 307 were housing discrimination complaints.

As in the previous year, the majority of housing discrimination complaints (54%) received by FHOM alleged differential treatment on the basis of disability. FHOM took 67 complaints of national origin discrimination (22%), 39 complaints of familial status discrimination (13%), and 34 complaints of race discrimination (11%).¹ FHOM also received 27 complaints regarding age discrimination, 26 complaints of gender discrimination, 12 complaints of marital status discrimination, six complaints alleging source of income discrimination, and two complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Through our Housing Counseling Program, we intervened in 24 rental housing matters on behalf of tenants, requested 42 reasonable accommodations (the majority of which were granted), funded 5 reasonable modifications to improve physical accessibility for people with disabilities, and referred 19 housing discrimination complaints to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development or the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing. We conducted investigations into possible housing discrimination at 79 rental properties, including an audit for discrimination on the basis of national origin.

By The Numbers

975 clients served

25 reasonable accommodations granted

5 reasonable modification requests funded

186 housing providers trained

19 administrative complaints filed

14 loan modifications negotiated

\$508,020 paid to homeowners through Keep Your Home California

Under a grant from the California Office of the Attorney General, we also launched an investigation into discrimination in the maintenance and marketing of more than 300 real estate-owned properties across the Bay Area.

Through our Foreclosure Prevention Program, we served 184 homeowners facing foreclosure, including screening 127 homeowners for eligibility for the Keep Your Home California program, negotiated 1 forbearance agreement, and successfully procured loan modifications on behalf of 14 homeowners. As a result of FHOM's Keep Your Home California counseling services, more than a dozen homeowners recovered over \$500,000 in funds.

Our fair housing literature reached more than 5,400 English, Spanish, and Vietnamese-speaking households. FHOM conducted comprehensive fair housing law and practice education training for 186 housing providers. In addition, FHOM made fair housing presentations to 202 tenants and staff at social service and/or advocacy organizations.

¹ As some complaints alleged discrimination on more than one basis, aggregate percentages exceed 100.



A group of approximately eleven tenants at a low-income, disabled senior housing complex reached out to FHOM for assistance in addressing their acrimonious relationship with an on-site property manager who allegedly engaged in a pattern of continuous harassment against elderly and disabled residents. FHOM staff met with a large group of tenants to discuss fair housing rights, and relayed the residents' concerns of housing discrimination to upper-level management through a series of discussions. In response to FHOM's advocacy efforts, the on-site property manager was replaced.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

"I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart. Without you I believe that I may have lost my home...People like you guys make the world go around!!! Keep doing what you're doing. It's working!" J.D., Santa Rosa

"I happen to be one of those vulnerable people - through no fault of my own, I am mentally ill. Fair Housing of Marin got me out of trouble and reinstated my secure housing because of the incredible intelligence, diligence and negotiating skills of Casey Epp. She's got heart ...I won't bore you with the details, except to say that my landlord was in the process of evicting me. I cannot express my deeply felt gratitude for Fair Housing of Marin and Casey Epp's work on my behalf." D.N., Novato

"I am grateful that there are attorneys dedicated to helping people who do not have much of a voice in our complex systems (disabled, seniors, minorities, etc.). Thank you so much for your help!" B.G., Mill Valley

"With a good deal of patience and tireless effort...you heard our pleas and supported our cause to the very end. Our compliments to you." M.L., Novato.

"Thanks so much for your help!" J.R., San Rafael

"I found out today that there is hope." Anonymous



FHOM intervened on behalf of a disabled veteran. In order to cope with her post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety, her doctor recommended the services of a companion dog. FHOM secured permission for the tenant's companion dog and an exemption from any pet fees or deposits as a reasonable accommodation.



In another case, a client received a 60-day notice to terminate tenancy, even though he was a Section 8 tenant and accordingly entitled to 90 days. Because of his mental disabilities, the client was concerned that he would need time in addition to that required by law. FHOM staff successfully

negotiated an extension of time to move as a reasonable accommodation, and helped secure a positive landlord reference to facilitate the client's housing search.



FHOM assisted a low-income, disabled mother with procuring a loan modification. The homeowner faced significant challenges to re-entering the workforce after a severe car accident left her permanently disabled, struggling to support her daughters and pay her mortgage. FHOM met with the homeowner after she had already defaulted on her loan, and worked with her to submit an application for a loan modification to her lender. As a result of FHOM's advocacy and counseling, the homeowner was offered a Home Affordable Modification Agreement, which lowered her interest rate from 6% to 2% and reduced her monthly payment by more than \$1,000. The homeowner has completed her three-month trial period, and is on her way to achieving long-term success and stability in her home.



A client asked FHOM for assistance communicating with the public housing authority. She had custody of her minor daughter per a court order, but was receiving conflicting information from different housing authority staff about whether she would be entitled to keep her 2-bedroom Section 8 voucher. FHOM staff contacted the client's Section 8 caseworker and confirmed that the client was still eligible for a two-bedroom voucher based on her family size; FHOM staff also arranged for smoother correspondence between the client and the caseworker in the future.