



2026 VIRTUAL
FAIR HOUSING CONFERENCE

**FAIR HOUSING JUSTICE:
EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES
IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

9:30 AM TO 1:30 PM PDT



Presented by:
Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California
www.fairhousingnorcal.org

Conference Presenters



Guest Speaker



Scott Wiener
California State Senator

Moderator



Liz Darby
Fair Housing Consultant

Featured Speakers



Thomas Silverstein
Executive Director
Poverty & Race Research Action
Council (PRRAC)



Matthew Staiger
Research Scientist
Opportunity Insights
Harvard University



Donald Whitehead
Executive Director
National Coalition
for the Homeless

Panelists



Vasudha Talla
Partner
Emery Celli Brinckerhoff
Abady Ward & Maazel LLP



Scott Chang
Senior Civil Rights Counsel
National Fair Housing Alliance



Lila Miller
Partner
Relman Colfax PLLC



Julia Howard-Gibbon
Co-Executive Director
Fair Housing Advocates
PANEL MODERATOR



Alexia Smokler
Director
Fair Housing Policy & Programs
National Association of REALTORS®



Farrah Wilder
Executive Director
Fair Housing Center
of Metropolitan Detroit



Doris Ramos
Home Loan Officer
Columbia Bank



DeAnthony Nelson
Strategic Partnerships
and DEI Program Manager
California Association of REALTORS®
PANEL MODERATOR

Conference Agenda



Conference Moderator:

- **Liz Darby**, Fair Housing Consultant

9:30-9:45 am – Conference Introduction

- **Julia Howard-Gibbon**, Co-Executive Director/Legal Director
Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California (FHANC)

9:45-10:00 am – Opening Remarks

- **California State Senator Scott Wiener**

10:00-10:30 am – Session 1

- **Thomas Silverstein**, Executive Director - Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC)

Impacts of Weakening Disparate Impact Protections

In this session, Thomas Silverstein will examine how threats to the disparate impact framework are affecting advocates' ability to bring impact litigation and challenge systemic discrimination. He will also explore the implications for enforcing and maintaining affirmative fair housing obligations at the state and local level and consider the ripple effects beyond housing, including how weakening disparate impact protections may influence broader efforts to advance racial equity, expand access to opportunity in multiple sectors and address structural barriers rooted in race and, socioeconomic status, and other protected characteristics.

10:30-11:30 am – Sessions 2 and 3 are concurrent panels

Session 2 Panel

- **Vasudha Talla**, Partner - Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP
- **Scott Chang**, Senior Civil Rights Counsel - National Fair Housing Alliance
- **Lila Miller**, Partner - Relman Colfax PLLC
- **Panel Moderator: Julia Howard-Gibbon**, Co-Executive Director/Legal Director - Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California (FHANC)

Strengthening Fair Housing Advocacy: Organizational Standing and Systemic Impact

One of the most important tools nonprofit organizations have to enforce civil rights laws is the ability to bring lawsuits on behalf of the organization when their investigations uncover evidence of discrimination. Known as organizational standing, this doctrine allows fair housing groups to challenge unlawful practices when the organization itself has been harmed by discriminatory conduct. Unlike individual cases, which may result in remedies limited to a single unit or household, organizational standing cases can lead to policy changes across multiple units, properties, and practices. This panel will explore the current state of organizational standing in fair housing law and why preserving it is critical to effective enforcement. Drawing on their litigation and advocacy experience, the panelists will discuss the state of the law and share examples of cases in which organizational standing helped achieve meaningful, wide-ranging fair housing relief.

Conference Agenda



10:30-11:30 am – Sessions 2 and 3 are concurrent panels

Session 3 Panel (This session will be held in a separate Zoom meeting.)

- **Alexia Smokler**, Director, Fair Housing Policy & Programs - National Association of REALTORS®
- **Farah Wilder**, Executive Director - Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit
- **Doris Ramos**, Home Loan Officer - Columbia Bank
- **Panel Moderator: DeAnthony Nelson**, Strategic Partnerships and DEI Program Manager - California Association of REALTORS® (C.A.R.)

Expanding Homeownership: Fair Housing Strategies for Underserved Communities

This panel will explore the challenges communities from protected classes may face in accessing homeownership and highlight how industry practices, support programs, and policy changes can help create more equitable and sustainable opportunities for underserved homebuyers.

11:30-11:45 am - Break

11:45 am - 12:30 pm – Session 4

- **Matthew Staiger**, Research Scientist - Opportunity Insights, Harvard University

Place, Opportunity, and Health: How Fair Housing Shapes Child Development

This session will highlight research showing how neighborhood conditions shape children's long-term economic opportunities. Focusing on the HOPE VI public housing revitalization program, the presentation will discuss evidence that improving housing environments and increasing social integration can significantly improve outcomes for children growing up in low-income communities.

12:30-1:15 pm – Session 5

- **Donald Whitehead**, Executive Director - National Coalition for the Homeless

Fair Housing Impacts on Housing Stability and Homelessness

This session will explore the intersection of fair housing and homelessness, focusing on key challenges, how policies and systems impact housing access and stability for vulnerable communities, and what jurisdictions, advocates, and stakeholders can do to better support equitable and stable housing outcomes.

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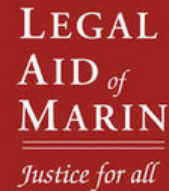
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Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California

Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California (FHANC) serves several Bay Area counties, providing fair housing counseling, investigation, intervention, representation, and legal referrals to persons experiencing housing discrimination. FHANC conducts outreach activities and offers programs that educate the community about fair housing and the value of diversity, conducts trainings for housing providers, and offers pre-purchase and foreclosure prevention counseling and education. FHANC is a HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency.

Contact us: TEL: (415) 457-5025 - TDD: (800) 735-2922 - www.fairhousingnorcal.org

Se habla español - Wheelchair accessible