

County of San Mateo

Fair Housing Action Plan

FY 2013-14 through FY 2017-18

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors, May 21, 2013, by Resolution No. _____

Values

The County of San Mateo is committed to eliminating racial and ethnic segregation, illegal physical and other barriers to persons with disabilities, and other discriminatory practices in housing. The County's fair housing commitment is governed by both the federal Fair Housing Act and state laws. The federal law provides protections based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and familial status. The California Fair Employment and Housing Act extends additional protections based on sexual orientation, ancestry, source of income, and marital status. A second state law, the Unruh Civil Rights Act, provides further protection from discrimination by business establishments, including housing providers, based on age.

On a yearly basis, as part of the Consolidated Plan process and submission of the Annual Action Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for funding under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Programs, the County certifies that it will continue to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH). The AFFH certification promises to undertake fair housing planning, including preparing an analysis of impediments to fair housing choice (AI); undertake actions to respond to the effects of the identified impediments; and maintain records to support efforts that affirmatively further fair housing.

Analysis of Impediments (AI) Process

The County along with the other four CDBG entitlement jurisdictions in San Mateo County have cooperated to develop a joint AI. The AI is a review of impediments or barriers that affect fair housing choice. It covers public and private policies, practices, and procedures affecting housing choice. The CDBG jurisdictions in the County consist of the Cities of Daly City, South San Francisco, San Mateo, Redwood City, and the County. As a CDBG jurisdiction, the County is the lead for the Urban County, comprising the 16 small cities and itself. The AI process included two public forums held in June 2012 – one in North County (South San Francisco) and the other in South County (Redwood City); an on-line survey in English and Spanish; and a public comment period from December 10, 2012 through January 25, 2013. The AI can be found at www.smchousing.org.

Fair Housing Action Plan

This Action Plan enumerates actions and strategies the County will undertake over the next five years to respond to impediments both identified and alluded to in the AI. Many of the actions are ongoing efforts. It should be noted that the five CDBG jurisdictions jointly identified the lack of affordable housing as an overarching impediment to fair housing choice. But since this impediment traverses both protected and unprotected classes, it does not technically meet the strict HUD definition of fair housing impediment, defined as “practices with an unjustified discriminatory effect, if those acts actually or predictably result in a disparate impact on a group of persons, or create, increase, reinforce, or perpetuate segregated housing patterns because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.” That notwithstanding, actions described below include supporting increasing the

supply of affordable housing. This Action Plan embraces a comprehensive approach, weaving enforcement, education, and increased access to affordable homes and supportive services.

Housing Development/Rehabilitation

1. Continue to support local efforts at developing housing developments utilizing smart growth principles; local initiatives include the El Camino Grand Boulevard Initiative, the North Fair Oaks Specific Plan, the 21 Elements Collaborative, among others.

Outcome: Increase in overall supply of affordable ownership and rental housing for all household types throughout the County.

2. Support the development of affordable housing which maximizes choices for all household sizes and household types, including occupants with disabilities and/or special needs.

Outcome: Quantifiable Increase in the supply of affordable housing serving a spectrum of special needs households.

3. Support housing improvements for both ownership and rental units that incorporate universal housing design principles benefiting disabled persons, and minor home repair programs that provide retrofits to enhance accessibility.

Outcome: Quantifiable increase in improvements for accessibility for seniors and disabled persons in existing housing.

Transportation

Support the development of improved public transit and transportation systems for seniors and the disabled, to better connect residents between their home and their destination.

Outcome: Improved transit/transport services for seniors and the disabled.

Public Awareness, Education and Training of Fair Housing Laws

1. Support efforts to improve federal and state information flow to local planning and building departments about accessibility design requirements for new and substantially rehabilitated housing.

Outcome: Quantifiable increase in the number of units that comply with federal and state accessibility requirements.

2. Continue to support efforts to educate and train landlords, property managers, and tenants on fair housing issues.

Outcome: Quantifiable increase in participation in voluntary trainings and education opportunities for fair housing awareness; also quantifiable increase the number of trainings on fair housing requirements.

3. Support efforts to educate the lending community about lending practices and outcomes that tend to negatively single out low income minority groups.

Outcome: A coordinated effort with buy-in from lending groups and multiple interests to better understand criteria for improved lending outcomes.

Enforcement and Testing

1. Work with local fair housing enforcement and monitoring agencies to support the development and maintenance of improved performance measures and systems that track progress of fair housing enforcement.

Outcome: Reliable information regarding fair housing complaints in both ownership and rental housing, and their resolution.

2. Continue to support audit testing to determine discrimination trends and issues.

Outcome: A downward trend over time in the number of fair housing complaints.

Services for Housing Stability

Seek opportunities to develop alternative funding sources (in addition to the 15% CDBG for public services) that effectively support safety net and other social services which effectively keep vulnerable populations stabilized in their housing.

Outcome: Quantifiable decrease in homelessness and lower turnovers of vulnerable households.