

ANNUAL REPORT – Calendar Year ending 2015
(Last completed Fiscal Year ended 6/30/15)

Long Island Housing Services' Mission Statement:

Our mission is the elimination of unlawful housing discrimination and promotion of decent and affordable housing through advocacy and education.

Dear Friends of Fair Housing:

Preparing this annual report provided the opportunity to review and be thankful for all that has been accomplished. For Long Island Housing Services (LIHS) 2015 was filled with incredible challenges, major growth opportunities and landmark accomplishments. Some of the highlights were:

- Responded to and provided assistance for **1,664** requests for housing counseling services on issues related to rentals, purchase or mortgage issues (e.g. first time buyer, foreclosure prevention, predatory lending; Fair Housing), **1,387** were low and low moderate income;
- Investigated **141** allegations of unlawful housing discrimination in rentals, sales, lending and advertising cases resulting in formal enforcement actions;
- Facilitated enforcement services for **18** prima facie complaints with *U.S. Dept. of HUD* and/or the *NYS Division of Human Rights and local Human Rights Commission* after investigations revealed evidence to pursue enforcement, **12** thus far resulted in favorable determinations and;
- Resolved numerous complaints informally through voluntary compliance as well as several formal administrative complaint resolutions and settlements, and favorable resolution of **2** judicial complaints filed in Federal Court involving a case for access for a client with disabilities in Nassau and a case for an accommodation in an over-55 community after our appeal to the Second Circuit overturned the District Court's initial judgement for the Defendant.
- Provided assistance to 562 homeowners facing foreclosure and continued to screen mortgage/foreclosure prevention clients for predatory lending abuses;
- Assisted 109 clients to prevent foreclosure, maintain housing/regain financial stability;
- In 2015, LIHS assisted 49 Mortgage Rescue Scam victims; of these sufficient information and authorizations allowed us to report 9 Mortgage Rescue Scam complaints to *Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law*;
- Legal staff provided 278 clients with Foreclosure Prevention services;
- Updated Social Media to reach greater numbers through launching Facebook page, Twitter Account and YouTube; enhanced its website: www.LIFairHousing.org; provided direct access to numerous resources; responded to public's inquiries/requests for assistance through the site;
- Dramatically increased number of housing units accessible to people with disabilities through advocacy services and enforcement efforts to include affirmative relief provisions in the public interest;
- In 2015, LIHS learned of a community known as the German-American Settlement League (GASL); its premise was limit ownership opportunities to those of German descent since the property has been owned by GASL since 1937. Prior to that it was owned by the German-American Bund, an American organization supporting Nazism. During that time period the property served as a camp where rallies and marches were held in support of Nazism and where pictures of Hitler and swastikas were displayed. The GASL's Constitution and Bylaws continued to place restrictions on membership on the basis of race and national origin until our recent challenge in federal Court *Kneers v GASL* resulted in settlement.
- Another notable pertains to successfully challenging/settling complaint with local municipality which imposed restrictive eligibility rules impacting people based on race, age and disability. (att.)

Another notable challenge is ongoing, (LIHS v Village of Mastic Beach, et al) also through Federal Court complaint based on FH Act and Constitutional violations and local law Source of income violations, etc.

- Active Member/Staff Participants of the *HomeSmartNY LI Chapter, formerly NYS Coalition for Excellence in Homeownership Education; HOPP Legal Services Network.*
- Provided assistance to 1,015 clients seeking Tenant's Rights counseling and provided screening for Fair Housing violations and First Time Homebuyer services.
- Served on *Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board;*
- Served on the Member Services Committee for the *National Fair Housing Alliance;*
- Served as Member of the *Suffolk Cooperative Library System Outreach Advisory Council*
- Continued working with the *Housing for All Coalition* seeking to expand the success in Suffolk County to pass statewide protections against housing discrimination based on Source of Income; and to ensure that proposed large housing project on Long Island provide affordable and accessible housing.
- Working with the Nassau-based *Long Island Housing Starts* coalition and St. Joseph's College's *Institute for Attainable Homes* on increasing the stock of accessible and affordable housing.
- Outreach to and collaboration with HUD-approved Housing Counseling agencies and related associates to prevent foreclosure and screen for predatory lending and discrimination;
- Provided Fair Housing and Fair Lending training for staff of Long Island Head Start; Fairfield Properties, LLC and government, housing industry, private and non-profit agencies;
- Conducted audits of Real Estate Brokers for familial status, race/color, national origin and disability discrimination. Results revealing high rate of discrimination will be used for enforcement actions;
- Sponsored, co-sponsored or participated in approximately **86** events, workshops and training seminars across Long Island to promote Fair Housing and services, increase awareness of available resources, increase compliance, educate public, non-profit and housing related industry providers;
- Accomplished major distribution of more than **12,000** LIHS' signature *Get Acquainted ... Fair Housing Rights Guide for Long Island* available in English and Spanish;
- Developed or updated numerous new bi-lingual outreach materials to educate and serve the public about services available and changes in programs for homeowners facing foreclosure and affected tenants;
- Assisted in federal entitlement agencies' compliance concerning required *Analyses of Impediments* (AI) to Fair Housing and offered training to LI's CDAs and HAs;
- Outreach to public and public-serving government and non-profit institutions to educate on locally available Fair Housing enforcement resources;
- Maintains association and satellite office at the *Public Advocacy Center at Touro Law Center* in Central Islip, NY;
- Supported collaborative measures to advocate for measures to restrict lending abuses, to promote affordable housing, Fair Housing and Consumer Protections;
- Received Excellent Performance Ratings from U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) related to competitive grant performance for Fair Housing Enforcement Initiatives and Organization Initiatives, having met or exceeded performance standards subsequent to on-site reviews and detailed required reporting and documentation reviews;
- Maintained Certification as a HUD-approved Local Comprehensive Housing Counseling agency through meeting and exceeding performance standards subsequent to intensive reviews and related, detailed required reporting and documentation submissions;

- Maintained and provided ongoing training for Housing Counselors, Fair Housing program staff; Foreclosure Prevention Staff Attorneys. (Staff was offered and utilized more than 50 formal training opportunities sponsored by U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), NeighborWorks, National Fair Housing Alliance, National Community Reinvestment Coalition NYS Division of Human Rights, et al;
- Maintained Foreclosure Prevention staff of 4 full time Housing Counselors; 4 full time Foreclosure Prevention Staff Attorneys; 1 Outreach Coordinator; 1 part time paralegal and 1 part time Consulting Attorney;
- Maintained senior Fair Housing Enforcement and Fair Lending special projects staff managers, investigators, a p/t outreach coordinator and Resource specialist providing counseling services on rental topics and program support;
- Continue to support 1 Full time Fair Housing Staff Attorney, admitted to practice in Federal and NYS Courts;
- Provided bilingual and translation services for approximately 173 clients;
- Maintained 9 bilingual, Spanish fluent Staff members, including one Staff Attorney, Housing Counselors, Investigators, Outreach Coordinators;
- Produced and aired 48 Spanish language radio programs- *Vivienda Justa*
- Trained **131** Fair Housing/Lending Testers, new law interns and office volunteers;
- Maintained memberships and supported associations locally and nationally with numerous organizations such as: *National Fair Housing Alliance, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, National Low Income Housing Coalition; Health & Welfare Council of LI; Long Island Language Advocates (LILAC), Long Island Coalition for the Homeless; Poverty & Race Research Action Council; Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board; Touro Law Center's Public Advocacy Center, Housing HELP; ERASE Racism, New Yorkers for Responsible Lending; National Fair Housing Advocate; Non- Profit Coordinating Committee, HomeSmart NY; Central Islip Civic Council; Housing For All Coalition; NAACP; Huntington Town Housing Coalition; Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, et al.*

Note LIHS' final audit for the most recently ended Fiscal Year: 7/1/2014 to 6/30/15 is available at www.LIFairHousing.org

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