



# Long Island Housing Services, Inc.

640 Johnson Avenue, Suite 8, Bohemia, New York 11716-2624  
Suffolk: 631-567-5111 ~ Nassau: 516-292-0400 ~ Fax: 631-567-0160  
[www.LIFairHousing.org](http://www.LIFairHousing.org)

## Board of Directors

Linda R. Hassberg, Esq.  
**President**  
Glen R. Cherveney, AIA  
**Vice President**  
Carol Germann  
**Secretary**  
Alex P. Ames, CPA  
**Treasurer**  
Georgette Grier-Key, Ed.D.  
Cathryn Harris-Marchesi, Esq.  
Connie Lassandro  
Lenora W. Long  
Berta Cevallos, CHI, NYS- CIT  
**President Emeritus**

## Executive Director

Michelle Santantonio

## Advisory Council

Frederick K. Brewington, Esq.  
Mildred Lewis  
Thomas Maligno, Esq.  
Robert W. Ralph  
Nina J. Stewart, Esq.  
Beth M. Wickey, Esq.

## Consultant

Juana Cortes de Torres, Esq.

## ANNUAL REPORT – Calendar Year ending 2016

(Last completed Fiscal Year ended 6/30/16)

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) 2016 was filled with incredible challenges, major growth opportunities and landmark accomplishments. Some of the highlights were:

- Responded to and provided assistance for **1359** 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), **1086** were low and low moderate income;
- Updated Social Media to reach greater numbers through launching Facebook page, Twitter Account and YouTube; enhanced its website: [www.LIFairHousing.org](http://www.LIFairHousing.org); provided direct access to numerous resources; responded to public's inquiries/requests for assistance through the site;
- Served on *Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board*; Member Services Committee for the *National Fair Housing Alliance*; and 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;
- Sponsored, co-sponsored or participated in approximately **60** 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 **3,750** LIHS' signature *Get Acquainted ... Fair Housing Rights Guide for Long Island* available in English and Spanish;



**A 501 (c) (3),  
not-for-profit,  
Fair Housing  
agency serving  
Long Islanders  
since 1969.**

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

- 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 168 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;
- Provided bilingual and translation services for approximately 76 clients;
- Maintained **6** bilingual, Spanish-fluent Staff members, including one Staff Attorney, Housing Counselors, Investigator, Outreach Coordinators;
- Produced and aired 60 Spanish language radio programs- *Vivienda Justa*
- Trained **50** Fair Housing/Fair 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: 7/1/2015 to 6/30/16 is available at [www.LIFairHousing.org](http://www.LIFairHousing.org).

Note: Program-specific reports below.

## **Fair Housing**

- Investigated **90** 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; 8 pending actions thus far resulted in favorable determinations during 2016.
- 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 complaint against the German-American Settlement League, filed on behalf of LIHS and two resident homeowners, involving claims of discrimination against the community which maintained policies in their bylaws that prevented access to the community to those who were non-white or not of Germanic origin; a federal court complaint against Nassau County Industrial Development Agency (companion to LIHS v Village of Great Neck Plaza previously resolved). Westbury Terrace Condominium, filed on behalf of LIHS and a client is pending in federal court, involving claims that the condominium refused to grant LIHS' client necessary reasonable modifications and accommodations as required under state and federal law;
- Dramatically increased number of housing units accessible to people with disabilities , many needing reasonable accommodations and/or reasonable modifications through advocacy services and enforcement efforts to include affirmative relief provisions in the public interest;
- In 2016, LIHS sponsored a Fair Housing Forum: Rights and remedies that featured guest presenter Michael J. Goldberg, Chief of the Housing section for Eastern District of NY, US Office of Civil Rights. Additionally, a settlement agreement reached during the fiscal year provided funding and advertising services for an LIHS-sponsored Fair Housing Expo, held recently in Watermill, Town of Southampton. This was an opportunity to collaborate with local government and non-profit service providers to highlight resources and services available, providing valuable landlord-tenant, fair housing, and foreclosure prevention information to residents of the area;
- Another notable pertains to a ramp was obtained for a building that had several disabled residents who had great difficulty getting out of the building due to the stairs leading from the doorway to the sidewalk level;
- 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;
- Maintained senior Fair Housing Enforcement and Fair Lending program manager, investigators, part-time 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;
- **17** prospective testers were trained; and
- Provided Fair Housing and Fair Lending training for staff of Long Island Head Start; and government, housing industry, private and non-profit agencies.

## **Fair Lending**

- Screened **75** client's mortgages for predatory/discriminatory lending.
- Filed 1 administrative complaint against a local credit union based on national origin and race discrimination revealed through testing;
- Provided training for the following organizations: Community Housing Innovations, Y.E.S. Program, independent brokers, LIHS' staff.
- Trained **31** prospective testers. Attendance of refresher course by **18** Per Diem Testers on fair lending testing. Access to **27** active Per Diem Testers trained to conduct lending testing.

## **Foreclosure Prevention**

- Provided housing counseling assistance to **291** homeowners facing foreclosure and continued to screen mortgage/foreclosure prevention clients for predatory lending abuses. Housing Counselors assisted **64** clients to prevent foreclosure, maintain housing/regain financial stability;
- Legal staff provided **368** clients with Foreclosure Prevention services and assisted **81** clients to prevent foreclosure, maintain housing/regain financial stability;
- Active Member/Staff Participants of the *HomeSmartNY LI Chapter, formerly NYS Coalition for Excellence in Homeownership Education; HOPP Legal Services Network;*
- Maintained Foreclosure Prevention staff of 4 full time Housing Counselors, 3 of whom are bilingual; 3 full time Foreclosure Prevention Staff Attorneys (1 bilingual); 1 bilingual Outreach Coordinator; 1 part-time paralegal and 1 part-time bilingual Consulting Attorney;

## **Foreclosure Rescue Scam Prevention**

- In 2016, LIHS assisted **45** Mortgage Rescue Scam victims; of these sufficient information and authorizations allowed us to report **3** Mortgage Rescue Scam complaints to *Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law*.

## **Tenant's Rights**

- Provided assistance to **770** clients seeking Tenant's Rights counseling and provided screening for these for Fair Housing violations and those needing First Time Homebuyer services.
- In 2016, Prevented a Senior Citizen from getting evicted for hoarding. He is able to stay in his apartment that he has lived in for many years.

### *2016 Board of Directors*

Linda R. Hassberg, Esq., President  
Carol Germann, Secretary  
Georgette Grier-Key, Ed.D.  
Connie Lassandro

Glen R. Cherveney, AIA, Vice President  
Alex P. Ames, CPA, Treasurer  
Cathryn Harris-Marchesi, Esq.  
Lenora W. Long

Berta Cevallos, CHI, NYS- CIT  
President Emeritus

*Executive Director:* Michelle Santantonio