



**COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICES**
IN EAST PALO ALTO

SALIMAH HANKINS
SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY

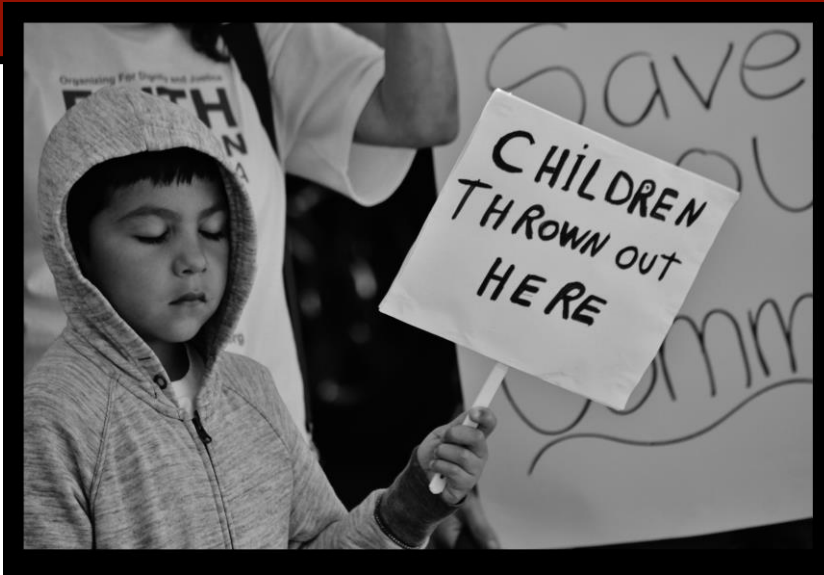
Why community groups engaged in the Assessment of Fair Housing

SILICON VALLEY'S HOUSING CRISIS



- Individuals and families in protected classes who have lived in communities for many years are being evicted for **no reason** (or without cause).
- Tenants are receiving large **rent increases** of \$500, \$1000, and even \$1500+ per month.
- Families must move away from their social networks, their schools, houses of worship, and jobs.

Identity of those displaced



- Community asserted that housing is one of the most pressing civil rights issues of our time.
- Conversations about displacement was being framed in purely economic terms without a discussion of who was impacted.
- Communities saw this as an opportunity to re-frame the housing crisis in the Bay Area.

17 organizations with thousands of members engage in the SMC AFH.

1. Public Advocates
2. Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
3. AFT Local 1481
4. AFT Local 3267
5. Bay Area Legal Aid
6. El Comité de Vecinos
7. Fair Rents for Pacifica
8. Faith in Action Bay Area
9. For North County
10. Housing Leadership Council
11. Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County
12. Migrante-Northern San Mateo County
13. National Housing Law Project
14. Project Sentinel
15. Urban Habitat
16. Youth Leadership Institute
17. Youth United for Community Action

Goals of community orgs

- Engage a robust community participation process to accomplish the following goals:
 - To emphasize who is being displaced and to correctly frame displacement as a civil rights issue.
 - To assist the County in collecting first-hand data about who is impacted by the housing crisis in SMC.



Goals of community orgs

- To emphasize the need for rent stabilization & just cause protections
- To emphasize that building affordable housing takes time, money, scale - is not targeted to addressing the needs of existing renters in protected classes.



Community participation

- Several calls and meetings with the County and consultants.
- 4000 respondents to survey in English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Chinese.
- Helped to organize identity-specific focus groups.
- Community groups at BoS meetings.
- Submitted 11 comment letters from various organizations.
- Several community meetings across the county.

Final Assessment of Fair Housing

- Disproportionate Housing Needs (severe cost burden, overcrowding, substandard conditions):
 - “HUD data show that African American and Hispanic residents have the highest rates of housing problems (50-60% of households experience housing problems, **largely cost burden**)”
 - “African American and Hispanic residents are disproportionately likely to be **affected by evictions** (both No Cause and Just Cause). The threat of eviction can have ‘silencing’ effect on residents who fear being evicted (undocumented, LEP, foreign-born); they tolerate very poor housing conditions remain housed.”
 - The Displacement crisis has been hard on everyone, but it **disproportionately harms** renters who are African-American, Latino, Filipino and Pacific Islander. It also harms People with Disabilities and Families with Children.

Final Assessment of Fair Housing

- HUD accepted the AFH despite the following concerns (though we don't know whether it was accepted because it was sufficient or because they ran out to time):
 - The AFH's Analysis of Segregation and Disparities in Access to Opportunity Fails to Identify Patterns of Racial Exclusion.
 - The AFH Omits Important Local Data and Knowledge Relevant to the Analysis of Racially/Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty
 - The Disproportionate Housing Needs Analysis Fails to Identify Regulatory and Political Contributing Factors to the Harms Experienced by Renters of Color.
 - Though Most of the Jurisdictions Identified Disproportionate Housing Needs as a Fair Housing Issue, the Contributing Factors to that Issue did not Include Tenant Protections as a Tool to Address Displacement.