

Learn About, and Celebrate Fair Housing Month

On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson, honoring the life and ideals of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., signed the history-changing Fair Housing Act (FHA). This landmark Act prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, sex, disability and family status.

This year REALTOR® members and associations proudly observe the 40th Anniversary of the FHA, as well as Martin Luther King's memory, and continue to work hard to provide fair access to affordable housing and homeownership.

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents of legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18), and handicap (disability).

When the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) was founded in 1908, its mission was to transform the real estate industry into a respected profession and to establish homeownership as a cornerstone of the American dream. “Since NAR was founded in 1908, NAR and its members have influenced nearly every aspect of the real estate industry and our profession,” says Richard Gaylord, 2008 NAR President. “It is REALTORS® who have helped raise the homeownership rate to nearly 70 percent, by advocating for laws and policies that protect making housing more affordable and accessible.”

Over the course of 100 years, NAR has worked closely with the federal government and other allies to build homeownership programs. Since passage of the FHA in 1968, NAR has evolved into a leader in the promotion of equal housing opportunity – developing landmark education for members, seeding programs for minority home buyers, seeking out a more diverse membership, and building partnerships with the Asian Real Estate Association of America (AREAA), the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals (NAHREP), and the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB).

In 1988 NAR led industry efforts to support important amendments to the FHA. It also expanded and implemented fair housing education requirements for members and has educated REALTORS® on the importance of inclusive housing practices and the promotion of minority homeownership.

Thus, the REALTOR® community, here in San Mateo County and at the state and national level, is fully committed to: (1) supporting fair housing laws; (2) improving access to affordable housing; and (3) increasing diversity in the real estate market.

Sue Walsh, 2008 President of the San Mateo County Association of REALTORS® notes, “As REALTORS® we are vested with the responsibility of ensuring that the goals of the FHA are recognized and achieved so that the American dream of homeownership can become a reality for everyone.”

For more information about the FHA, laws related to fair housing, or a copy of the Act, please visit the Department of Justice web site at:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/housing/fairhousing/>

For information about FHA loans and other affordable housing programs in San Mateo County, please visit the County's web site at:

<http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/smc/departement/home>

The San Mateo County Association of REALTORS® (SAMCAR) is a professional trade organization representing over 3,800 REALTORS® and Affiliate members engaged in the real estate business on the Peninsula. SAMCAR promotes the highest ethical standards of real estate practice, serves as an advocate for homeownership and homeowners, and represents the interests of property owners in San Mateo County. For more information, please contact Michon Coleman, Director of Public Affairs at 650.696.8200.