

ECHO Housing Landlord/Tenant Counselor

Alameda County

Report for July – September 2015

Mary Colbert

Landlord/Tenant Counselor

Marvel Mills

Housing Counselor

ECHO Housing Landlord/Tenant Counseling Services
Alameda County
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During the first quarter of FY 15-16, evictions and rent increases were the most common inquiries received and addressed by the Landlord/Tenant counseling staff. We handled 55 evictions, 13 deposits, 19 repairs, 62 rent increases, 3 entries, and 71 other inquiries. Other services include: breaking rental contracts and leases, mold, harassment, noise, rental assistance, and providing general information on tenants' and landlords' rights with referrals to attorneys, small claims court, and eviction defense center. We served 207 clients who had 223 inquiries in the first quarter.

Cases mediated

There were a total of 10 cases mediated this quarter. There weren't any outstanding cases this past quarter. The majority of calls is regarding evictions, deposits, and rent increases.

Eviction Mediations

There were 11 eviction mediations/attempted reconciliations this quarter. The ECHO Counselors had 7 successful eviction mediations.

Example of an eviction mediation

One case involved a tenant who has resided in her unit for 26 years. Monies were to be deposited into her account. The tenant did not check her account and wrote the check to pay the rent. The check bounced and the Landlord gave her a 3-day notice. The tenant called ECHO to negotiate for more time or let her make partial payments. The Counselor called the owner and explained the problem. He stated that he would give her time to reimburse him. This mediation was successful. The Counselor will remain dedicated and focused in the empowerment of our clients and the prevention of homelessness.

Landlord-related inquiries

Of 207 clients this quarter, 2 were owners, property managers, and/or resident managers requesting information, referral, mediation, and assistance.

Outreach

ECHO has completed mass media advertising in Newpark Mall and Bayfair, each for a 6-month period.

Trends

Although there appears to be some economic growth, many of our clients are working part time Jobs and/or have been forced to receive public assistance, forcing them to move out of their homes due to the increases of rent. We have noted that some of the increases for this first quarter have raised the Alameda County Rent Ordinance threshold.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Colbert

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Tenant/Landlord Counselor

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Alameda County Rent Mediation Program
First Quarter 2015-16
Rent Increase Inquiries

SUMMARY

In this first quarter, staff handled a total of 61 rent increase inquiries. Four of these increases were successfully negotiated. The other 57 inquiries were from tenants who had questions about rent increases that they may be receiving but have not occurred yet, or declined mediation because of its non-binding nature. All tenants were given proper information about the County Ordinance and the amount of time to pay the increase according to state law.

In addition to the state law and ordinance information, every tenant whose rent increase is subject to review is offered mediation.



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ALAMEDA COUNTY
FAIR HOUSING
Report for July 2015 – September 2015

INVESTIGATIONS

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2015-2016, ECHO received 5 complaints of housing discrimination, and completed 8 audits.

We are finding that the protected classes alleging the most discrimination in this quarter are race and disability. The Coordinator closed 13 cases. See “Services by Protected Class” sheet for outcomes.

Significant Case:

A significant case this quarter dealt with age discrimination. It is rare that ECHO receives a housing discrimination complaint based on age. In this case, a young man and his friend attempted to rent an apartment in Dublin. They both work and make good incomes and had good credit. Both felt that the leasing agent gave them misinformation and was actually discouraging them from renting at the complex. ECHO called and spoke to the property manager. She apologized for her agent if she had in fact treated them with disrespect. She told me to have the potential tenants to call her. The clients decided to rent elsewhere and declined to pursue the case.

CONTRACT GOALS

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2015-2016, staff has met or exceeded goals in 3 out of 8 categories. The Coordinator conducted fair housing presentations at Alameda County Social Services on August 27, Central County Marketing Group on September 2, and Alameda County Housing & Community Development on September 24.

The Specialist attended a Northern California Fair Housing Coalition meeting on September 8.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2015-2016, the Coordinator provided information at the Solid Rock Resource Fair in Newark on August 15.



Eden Council for Hope and Opportunity

ALBANY - Reporting Period: July through September 2015	Current	Last Period	YTD
1. Female	0		0
2. Disabled	1		1
3. Family Size			
1 - 4	2		2
5+	0		0
4. Age of Head of Household			
<18	0		0
<62	1		1
62+	1		1
5a. Ethnicity of Clients			
Hispanic	0		0
Not Hispanic	2		2
Chose not to respond	0		0
5b. Race of Clients			
American Indian/Alaska Native	0		0
Asian	0		0
Black or African American	1		1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0		0
White	1		1
Multi-Race			
American Indian/Alaska Native & White	0		0
Asian & White	0		0
Black or African American & White	0		0
American Indian/Alaska Native & Black or African American	0		0
Other Multiple Race	0		0
6. Income Levels			
0 - 30% of Area Median Income (AMI)	1		1
31 - 50% of AMI	1		1
49 - 80% of AMI	0		0
81 - 100% of AMI	0		0
>100% of AMI	0		0
Chose not to respond	0		0
7. Impacts/Outcomes			
c. Households for whom counselor developed a sustainable household budget through the provision of financial management and/or budget services.	0		0
d. Households that improved their financial capacity (e.g. increased discretionary income, decreased debt load, increased savings, increased credit score) after receiving Housing Counseling Services.	0		0
e. Households that gained access to resources to help them improve their housing situation (e.g. down payment assistance, rental assistance, utility assistance, etc.) after receiving Housing Counseling Services.	1		1
f. Households that gained access to non-housing resources (e.g. social service programs, legal services, public benefits such as Social Security or Medicaid, etc) after receiving Housing Counseling Services.	0		0
g. Homeless or potentially homeless households that obtained temporary or permanent housing after receiving Housing Counseling Services.	0		0
h. Households that received rental counseling and avoided eviction after receiving Housing Counseling Services.	0		0
----- 1) Remained in place	0		0
----- 2) Voluntary Vacate	0		0
i. Households that received rental counseling and improved living conditions after receiving Housing Counseling Services.	1		1
Negotiated rent increase	0		0
TOTAL	2	0	2