

A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

# FAIR HOUSING: LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
**Kim Desmond**  
"Changing The Story"  
Chief of Race & Equity,  
City of SD Department  
of Race and Equity



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# WELCOME! TO OUR

## SAN DIEGO REGIONAL ALLIANCE FOR FAIR HOUSING CONFERENCE 2024!

The San Diego Regional Alliance for Fair Housing (SDRAFFH) and the San Diego Housing Federation will engage in a conversation about historical policies and current obstacles that hinder fair and equal access to housing.

We all recognize that The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. The act has two main purposes—prevent discrimination and reverse housing segregation.

Fair Housing- Leveling the Playing Field will change the discussion by creating awareness on topics that must be changed to build equitable outcomes and prevent housing discrimination. We will illuminate and dive into several topics that are impacting our communities. Our speakers today will enlighten and discuss the inequities in our housing policies. We must seek strategies to eliminate systemic racism. These 2 days will change the story and analyze various challenging topics. The invited speakers are a panel of distinguished experts in their field.

To begin, One in three people in the United States have a criminal record, A criminal conviction can be a lifelong barrier to accessing services, employment, voting and civic engagement, education and housing, The criminal legal system disproportionately affects communities of color. The mark of a criminal record, paired with other policies and practices that contribute to a long history of systemic racial discrimination, contributes to poverty for communities of color. This affects many generations. Ending this cycle will require robust investments in changing actions that would give everyone access to housing opportunities.

To add, The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is a federal law that, in part, provides housing protections for people applying for or living in units subsidized by the federal government and who have experienced domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, to help keep them safe and reduce their likelihood.

Lastly, tenants are affected by hidden fees that are known as Junk fees. From an ethical perspective, hidden fees can be seen as misleading and unfair to the tenant. Landlords may use these fees as a way to charge more for their units. This leaves the tenant with higher costs and with feelings deceit and frustration.

In continuing to uphold and support equity, we must change the story and begin to strategize to level the playing field! I extend my gratitude for joining us today. Collectively, we will combat discrimination and strive towards equitableness, fairness and integrity to Furthering Fair Housing.

**“Justice delayed is justice denied.”**  
**William Ewart Gladstone**

Sincerely,  
**Estela De Los Rios**  
President of SDRAFFH, and  
Executive Director of CSA San Diego County

# SAN DIEGO REGIONAL ALLIANCE FOR FAIR HOUSING



The San Diego Regional Alliance for Fair Housing is a dedicated group of professionals working together to ensure that all residents in San Diego County have equal access to housing.

Visit our website [www.sdfairhousing.org](http://www.sdfairhousing.org).



## OUR MEMBERS:

City of Carlsbad  
City of Chula Vista  
City of Coronado  
City of Del Mar  
City of El Cajon  
City of Encinitas  
City of Escondido  
City of Imperial Beach  
City of La Mesa  
City of Lemon Grove  
City of National City

City of Oceanside  
City of Poway  
City of San Diego  
County of San Diego  
City of San Marcos  
City of Santee  
City of Solana Beach  
City of Vista  
San Diego Housing Commission  
CSA San Diego County  
Legal Aid Society of San Diego

# CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY ONE – APRIL 17TH

9:00 AM – 9:15 AM

## WELCOME REMARKS

9:15 AM – 10:00 AM

## LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD – CHANGING THE STORY

**DESCRIPTION:** Our keynote will discuss the need for creating policies and strategies to build equitable outcomes with a target focus on eliminating systemic racism.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Kim Desmond, Chief of Race & Equity  
City of SD Department of Race and Equity

**MODERATOR:** Carlos Aguirre, Housing and Community Development Director  
City of National City

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM

## CHANGING THE STORY – INEQUITIES IN LENDING (BIPOC)

**DESCRIPTION:** This session will explore the programs being enacted to change the story to one that overcomes lending inequities to BIPOC individuals and families seeking homeownership.

**SPEAKER:** Maurcell Gresham, Director of Special Programs, San Diego Housing Commission

**MODERATOR:** Carlos Aguirre, Housing and Community Development Director  
City of National City

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM

## BREAK

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

## LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD – TENANT PROTECTIONS AND JUNK FEES

**DESCRIPTION:** This panel will provide an overview of tenant protections and legislation to combat landlord efforts to impose rental junk fees.

**SPEAKERS:** Jennifer Monterroso, Housing Team Managing Attorney, Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc.

Chris Brancart, Partner, Brancart & Brancart

**MODERATOR:** Amalea Romero, SDRAFFH VP

# CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY TWO – APRIL 18TH

9:00 AM – 9:15 AM

## WELCOME REMARKS

9:15 AM – 10:45 AM

## CHANGING THE STORY – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**DESCRIPTION:** This panel will provide an overview of fair housing laws, strategies, policies, and best practices that can change the story for survivors of violence.

**SPEAKERS:** Rasheedah Phillips, Director of Housing , PolicyLink

Stephanie Rabiner, Enforcement Branch Chief , Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity ,US Department of Housing and Urban Development

Analicia McKee-Chau, Director of DV Services & Shelter Operations, SBGS

**MODERATOR:** Estela De Los Rios, SDRAFFH President

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM

## BREAK

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

## LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD – OVERCOMING CHALLENGES OF A CRIMINAL HISTORY

**DESCRIPTION:** This panel will explore issues affecting individuals with criminal history, how it impacts their housing opportunities along with solutions to that change their story.

**SPEAKER:** Azadeh Hossinian , Associate Chief Counsel, CA Civil Rights Department

Braz Shabrell, Deputy City Attorney , Office of the Oakland City Attorney Barbara J. Parker

Michael Whyte, Organizer, Pillars of the Community

**MODERATOR:** Eric Bunge, Housing Program Manager, City of Chula Vista

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## KIM DESMOND KEYNOTE

**CHIEF RACE AND EQUITY OFFICER  
DEPARTMENT OF RACE AND EQUITY,  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

She is currently the Chief Race and Equity Officer for the City of San Diego, leading the Department of Race and Equity for Mayor Todd Gloria. Prior to this appointment, Kim served as the Director and Interim Chief Equity Officer for Mayor Michael B. Hancock, overseeing the Mayor's Office of Social Equity and Innovation within the City and County of Denver.

Kim has an extensive background operationalizing racial equity into local government programs, budget allocations, and policies through building equitable outcomes with a targeted focus on eliminating systemic racism.

### KIM'S AREAS OF EXPERIENCE INCLUDE:

**Policy and Operations:** Improving policy, service delivery and equitable distribution of resources to ensure that priorities of equity are integrated in key programs, practices, and budget decisions.

**Implementation:** Coordinating and developing city-wide Race and Equity offices through normalizing racial equity tools and social justice practices across two large local government systems comprised of over 12,000 employees.

**Learning and Development:** Designing curriculum and facilitating training on racial equity and inclusion that contextualizes historic oppression, systemic racism, and implicit/explicit biases to guide departments on building equitable outcomes.

**Evaluation, Assessment and Process Improvement:** Creating infrastructure and systems to evaluate equitable outcomes and integrate Racial Equity Tools.



## RICARDO FLORES MC

Ricardo Flores was named Executive Director of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) San Diego in April 2017. He joined the non-profit funding agency after serving for 12 years in leading roles with top San Diego elected officials.

In his role, Mr. Flores oversees LISC's extensive network of investment-based collaborations that support San Diego's underserved neighborhoods, including City Heights, Colina Park, and Greater Logan Heights.

LISC San Diego supports neighborhood revitalization

efforts by assisting community groups through financing, grants, loans and equity capital, in addition to providing technical and management assistance, training opportunities, and additional resources. A native of City Heights, Ricardo and his wife live in Kensington.

Prior to serving as Councilmember Emerald's chief of staff, Flores was a senior aide to Congresswoman Susan Davis (D-CA), dating back to 2005. Flores has always taken an active role in his community. A long-time Meals on Wheels volunteer, he also served on numerous advisory boards and committees including the San Diego Chicano Democratic Association; San Diego Community College District; and United Way Plan to End Chronic Homelessness Resource.

After graduating from UCLA with a BA degree in Theatre, Film & Television, Flores spent several years in Los Angeles as a production assistant, most notably on the movie "Shrek 2" (2004). He also taught English in Barcelona, Spain.

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**CARLOS  
AGUIRRE**

Carlos Aguirre has over 25 years of experience in Housing and Community Development and is currently the Housing and Community Development Director for the City of National City. He oversees the National City Housing Authority and the Community Development Department which includes the Building, Planning, and Neighborhood Services Division.

Carlos has directed the planning, development, and implementation of large-scale housing and community development programs and projects including the City's Housing Element and Focused General Plan Update and oversees the Section 8

Rental Assistance Program, and federal and state entitlement programs such as the HUD CDBG and HOME grant programs. Since 2008, Carlos has facilitated the development of over \$600 million in new affordable housing projects and the preservation of over 1200 affordable housing units in National City.

Carlos grew up in Barrio Logan and graduated from Yale University with a degree in History. He served on the Board of the San Diego Housing Federation from 2003 to 2004 and was the recipient of the John Craven Memorial Award for his dedication to public service in 2021.



**CHRISTOPHER  
BRANCART**

Christopher Brancart is a partner in Brancart & Brancart, a law firm located in Pescadero, California, specializing in federal fair housing litigation. He practices with two partners, Elizabeth Brancart and Liza Cristol Deman.

Chris graduated with honors from the University of Texas School of Law in 1985. Following law school, he clerked for the Honorable Vincent McKusick, Chief Justice of Maine, and then taught appellate advocacy and administrative law at Western State University College of Law.

From 1987 to 1989, Chris worked as a staff and then supervising attorney at the Legal Services Program in Pomona, California.

Since entering private practice in 1989, Chris has focused on litigating cases that expand fair housing rights, devising methods that improve fair housing investigations, and supporting fair housing attorneys and advocates through trainings and co-counseling.

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**ERIC  
BUNGE**

**HOUSING PROGRAM MANAGER  
FOR THE CITY OF VISTA**

Eric's career journey has taken him through a variety of adventures, but he found his true calling once we landed at Habitat for Humanity. Since that time, he has spent the last 7 years working to further housing opportunities for those in need. He has advocated for programs, executed projects, worked with local and state leaders, and is pursuing innovative ideas to help solve the housing and homelessness problems we face today. He has a true passion for serving others and feels blessed to be in a position at the Vista of City to where can effect positive change.

In his off time, he loves to golf, volunteer and go on hikes with his wife Michelle and puppy Keona.



**MAURCELL  
GRESHAM**

Maurcell Gresham is the Director of Special Programs Development for the San Diego Housing Commission. His responsibilities include overseeing the WORTH Grant project, funded by Wells Fargo, Supplier Diversity, and has administrative oversight of the Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) process for the Housing Commission. He was formerly the Director of Procurement and has been a member of the San Diego Housing Commission for almost 22 years.

Maurcell is a United States Navy Veteran and a former Mr. Black San Diego winner who has been involved in various aspects of community service from working with the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and San Diego Urban League Young Professionals. Maurcell is married to his wonderful wife Carla, and they have two beautiful children.



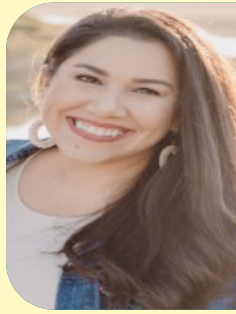
Azadeh Hosseinian is an Associate Chief Counsel at the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) where she investigates and enforces individual and systemic complaints of housing discrimination. Azadeh joined the Department in 2020 as Staff Counsel.

Azadeh has a strong background in enforcing civil rights laws. Prior to CRD, Azadeh was a Staff Attorney at the Southern California Housing Rights Center in Los Angeles, where she represented tenants in challenging discriminatory housing practices.





# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**ANALICIA  
MCKEE-CHAU, SBSCS**



Analicia McKee-Chau, Director of Domestic Violence Services and Shelter Operations, has worked with SBSCS for over 10 years. Analicia directly oversees the agency's Domestic Violence programming which includes two confidential Domestic Violence Shelters, Transitional Housing, and Rapid Re-housing programs as well as the agency's 24/7 Domestic Violence Response Team, Victim Advocate team, and counseling services for victims.

Analicia is an active member of the San Diego Domestic Violence Council and sits on their Executive Committee and Steering Committee. She has been part of the San Ysidro Domestic Violence Prevention Collaborative for five years and spearheads the South Region Coalition of the DV Council. Analicia graduated with an M.S. in Mental Health Counseling, and has experience in direct service, program management, and facilitation of individual and group therapy with survivors of domestic violence.



**JENNIFER  
MONTERROSO**



Jennifer Monterroso is the Managing Attorney for the Housing Team at the Legal Aid Society of San Diego.

The Housing Team assists tenants in all stages of eviction litigation while also performing policy work to help shape housing law in San Diego. Prior to becoming the Managing Attorney of the Housing Team, Jennifer was a Lead Attorney and Staff Attorney on the Shriver Housing Team for seven years, doing intensive litigation, defending tenants

in court who were facing eviction. Jennifer graduated from California Western School of Law in 2015 and is a graduate of California State University Long Beach.

Jennifer enjoys having the unique opportunity to have a direct and positive impact on the lives of her clients every day. She believes access to justice should not be available exclusively to those who can afford it.



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**RASHEEDAH  
PHILLIPS**



Rasheedah Phillips, Director of Housing, leads PolicyLink's national advocacy to support the growing tenants' rights, housing, and land use movements in partnership with grassroots partners, movement leaders, industry, and government leaders.

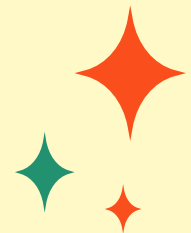
Previously serving as Managing Attorney of Housing Policy at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, Rasheedah has led various housing policy campaigns that resulted in significant legislative changes, including a right to counsel for tenants in Philadelphia, and the Renter's Access Act, one of the strongest laws in the nation to address blanket ban eviction polices having a disparate impact on renters of color.

Rasheedah has trained on racial justice and housing law issues and skills throughout the country, previously serving as the Senior Advocate Resources & Training Attorney at Shriver Center on Poverty Law.

Rasheedah's leadership has been recognized with the recipient of the 2017 National Housing Law Project Housing Justice Award, the 2017 City & State Pennsylvania 40 Under 40 Rising Star Award, the 2018 Temple University Black Law Student Association Alumni Award, and more. Rasheedah is also an interdisciplinary afrofuturist artist and cultural producer who has exhibited and performed work globally.



**STEPHANIE  
RABINER**



Stephanie Rabiner is the San Francisco Enforcement Branch Chief in HUD's Region IX Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO), where she oversees a team of investigators. Her staff is responsible for investigating, analyzing and conciliating housing discrimination complaints in the states of California, Arizona, Hawaii, and Nevada.

Stephanie has over 10 years of fair housing experience, handling complex matters involving discrimination in rentals, sales, mortgage lending,

and federally assisted programs. Prior to joining FHEO, Stephanie worked at Project Sentinel, a non-profit Bay Area fair housing agency, where she investigated housing discrimination complaints and represented tenants and homeowners. A native of the Westside of Los Angeles, Stephanie earned her B.A. at the University of California, Berkeley and her J.D. at Washington University in St. Louis. Stephanie is licensed to practice law in California.

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## ESTELA DE LOS RIOS

With over 35 years of management experience, Estela De Los Rios prides herself in the work she does as a civil rights activist. The East County resident serves as Executive Director at CSA San Diego County, a nonprofit organization that fights for social justice issues such as opposing human trafficking, hate crimes and eradicating housing discrimination. She is committed to promote and enforce fair housing laws and equal housing opportunities for all individuals.

She plays an important role on the Board of Directors of the following organizations: President of the San Diego Regional Fair Housing Alliance Board, Latinos y Latinas En Accion, Justice Overcoming Boundaries, Lemon Grove Thrive, World Without Exploitation, East County Justice Coalition and a member of National

Fair Housing Alliance. In 2012, Estela received the Ashley Walker Social Justice Award at San Diego's annual Martin Luther King Breakfast for her contributions in making San Diego community a better place for all people. Rotary International bestowed Estela the 2015 Paul Harris Fellow award and medal. Estela was also given through the San Diego County Board of Supervisors a special commendation of recognition from Supervisor, Dianne Jacob for her advocacy in human trafficking.

Estela is a Graduate of Rockwood Leadership Institute, and a graduate of Fieldstone Executive Leadership of San Diego. Most recently, Estela served as a Commissioner for the Leon L. Williams San Diego County Human Relations Commission, 2020. Lastly, Estela De Los Rios story was selected as one of 50 Latinos in San Diego for the San Diego History Center. Estela holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from SDSU. Ms. De Los Rios believes in respect, dignity and human rights for all people regardless of their racial background, language, national origin, religious practice, sexual orientation, gender, age or disability is what makes her the humanitarian she is today.



## AMALEA ROMERO

Amalea Romero is the Managing Attorney for the Fair Housing Team at the Legal Aid Society of San Diego. She has worked in landlord-tenant law and eviction defense, and her current practice focuses on combatting housing discrimination. She works to enforce the Fair Housing Act and related state laws through conciliation, administrative complaints, and litigation.

Amalea received her B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Spanish Literature from UC San Diego while playing shortstop on the UCSD Softball team. She

went on to receive her J.D. from the USD School of Law, where she graduated magna cum laude. Amalea began her legal career with the Legal Aid Society of San Diego as a Staff Attorney for the Housing Team, before transitioning to the Fair Housing Team.

Amalea has always been passionate about civil rights, in particular when it comes to preserving housing stability for those most vulnerable in the community. She is honored to work in an area that promotes housing justice for all.

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**BRAZ  
SHABRELL**

Braz Shabrell is a Deputy City Attorney for the City of Oakland, where they advise on laws and policies pertaining to residential tenancies (rent control, eviction protections, tenant harassment, relocation, etc.). Prior to joining the City, Braz worked as a tenants' rights attorney at Centro Legal de la Raza and the East Bay Community Law Center, where they assisted low-income tenants facing eviction and other forms of displacement.



**MICHAEL  
WHYTE**

I grew up in Southeast San Diego and was documented as a gang member at 11 years old. My community has been terrorized by law enforcement and a result of that was spending most of my adult life in prison. From the age of 20 to 40 I only spent 2 birthdays on the streets. I've been home for six years and I work for pillars of the community. A non-profit organization that advocates for people negatively impacted by law enforcement. We hold expungement clinics and know your rights trainings amongst other things. It's the greatest work I've ever done!



# SEE YOU THERE!