

Training Classes for January 2013

Here's a quick rundown of upcoming real estate events and education for January in Oregon and Southwest Washington. If you have an event that's not listed here, let us know in the comments!

January 24: Dos and Don'ts for Today's Real Estate Licensees

Join professionals for some continuing education in Florence on January 24, 2013. Stacey Harrison and Selina Barnes, Division Managers with the Oregon Real Estate Agency, will discuss complaints, investigations, and how REALTORS® can stay in compliance with Oregon's laws and rules. Location: Florence Events Center, Florence, OR – \$25

January 31: PMAR Masters Circle Educational Event

Portland Metropolitan Association of REALTORS® offers a panel of top producers sharing their expertise to attendees. Breakfast will be served, and you do not need to be a Masters Circle member to attend! Location: Multnomah Athletic Club – \$22

FREE RMLSweb Training

If you are an RMLS™ subscriber, we have many free educational opportunities at a location near you. View the current calendar for your area by clicking the link.

- Brookings
- Coos County
- Eastern Oregon
- Eugene
- Gresham
- Hood River
- Portland
- Roseburg
- Salem

-Vancouver

Don't forget to check out our webinars for training outside these areas, and the Open House hours at the Portland office each Friday (10am-noon) when subscribers may consult with Help Desk staff for individualized attention.

You can also find ongoing education and training classes through a number of different associations in the Portland metro area and beyond. To search for classes in January, classes check out the current event listings at the following associations:

Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors® (PMAR)

East Metro Association of Realtors® (EMAR)

Clark County Association of Realtors® (CCAR)

Supra Lockbox Activity December 17-23, 2012

This Week's Lockbox Activity

For the week of December 17-23 2012, these charts show the number of times RMLS™ subscribers opened Supra lockboxes in Oregon and Washington. The numbers in Oregon and Washington fell again this week.

For a larger version of each chart, visit the RMLS™ photostream on Flickr.

Supra Lockbox Activity

December 10-16, 2012

This Week's Lockbox Activity

For the week of December 10-16 2012, these charts show the number of times RMLS™ subscribers opened Supra lockboxes in Oregon and Washington. The numbers in Oregon and Washington fell again this week.

For a larger version of each chart, visit the RMLS™ photostream on Flickr.

Supra Lockbox Activity

December 3-December 9, 2012

This Week's Lockbox Activity

For the week of December 3-9 2012, these charts show the number of times RMLS™ subscribers opened Supra lockboxes in Oregon and Washington. The numbers in both Oregon and Washington fell this week.

For a larger version of each chart, visit the RMLS™ photostream on Flickr.

Is RMLS™ a Good Value? Subscriber Satisfaction Survey Results

This week, we conclude our series featuring subscriber feedback gleaned from fall's Subscriber Satisfaction Survey. (Check out our earlier posts: *How Are We Doing?*, *How Do You Interface with RMLS™?*, and *How Do You Get Trained?*)

RMLS™ strives to provide great value. In fact, our trainers find that many subscribers aren't fully aware of the breadth of features available on RMLSweb. Lead trainer Gerry Chasse explains:

One principal broker I recently met put it succinctly: "most agent brokers log on to RMLSweb to learn the few functions they need to gather information for a client, never discovering the multitude of other useful tools this website provides."

Our Subscriber Relations Representatives, Trainers, and Help Desk personnel repeatedly mention surprised reactions from subscribers, who exclaim "wow!" and "I didn't know you could do that—is that something new?" when one or several of these tools provide a quick, informative, and efficient solution to a long-standing problem or question. Subscribers who continually examine the various parts of the website and educate themselves about the latest upgrades or changes are those who have the market advantage.

If you'd like to find out more about the capabilities of RMLSweb, check out offerings on the RMLS™ training calendar.

On to the survey...

How would you rate the overall value of the services you

receive from RMLS™?

Overall, RMLS™ subscribers rated us a 3.9. Interestingly, the number of 3 and 5 ratings were tied at 738, and there was a strong amount of 4s (525).

Subscriber comments:

- *"Without RMLS™ I could not do my job! Plain and simple."*
- *"Nothing is perfect! And for the most part this is very good, in my opinion."*
- *"I appreciate the Open House hours that you have. The one time that I signed up for a three hour class and I was to only one that showed up. I received personal one-on-one training and learned a great deal. She could have cancelled the class, but did not and that brought my attention to how grateful I am to have the RMLS. Keep up the good job!"* [Ed. Note: Open House hours are at our Portland office each Friday from 10am-Noon.]
- *"Thank you...I know pleasing all of us is not easy."*
- *"My biggest complaint is RLMS not staying current with technology. There are lots of brokers using Apple products and smartphones with bluetooth. It's time to address compatibility issues with Apple and switch to bluetooth lockboxes."*
- *"I find the other websites to be more user friendly and have much higher profiles in search engines than RMLS. I'd like to see it be a marketing tool to advertise to clients as opposed to just an information exchange between agents with the funky rmls.com site for our clients."*
- *"I practiced real estate in California and the dues you charge are a fraction of what it costs to be part of the MLS there."*
- *"I appreciate the fact that RMLS™ keeps trying to improve. As I mentioned above, I am personally looking for things which work well, not more things."*
- *"I wish all the other mls organizations would consolidate with RMLS, which the the best of the lot."*

- *“The RMLS website has to be Mac friendly, period, it must work with Safari.”*
- *“PEACE 2 U.”*

That’s it for this series. RMLS™ staff has been scrutinizing the results—subscriber feedback will be used by the RMLS™ Board of Directors to determine what projects we take on over the next year. Survey feedback impacts our work around the office every day. We sincerely hope you’ve enjoyed reading results from the 2012 Subscriber Satisfaction Survey!

Supra Lockbox Activity November 26-December 2, 2012

✘ This Week’s Lockbox Activity

For the week of November 26-December 2, 2012, these charts show the number of times RMLS™ subscribers opened Supra lockboxes in Oregon and Washington. This week, the numbers in both Oregon and Washington rebounded sharply from the previous week.

For a larger version of each chart, visit the RMLS™ photostream on Flickr.

Fair Housing is Not All Black

and White

Following is an article by Nadeen Green, an attorney who has spoken on fair housing topics to residential rental audiences across the country since the Fair Housing Amendments Act's inception in 1989.

Here at the Fair Housing Council (FHC0) we make ourselves available to those who feel their fair housing rights have been violated, as well as to those with fair housing questions, including housing providers! If you have a question about your rights or responsibilities under federal, state, and local fair housing laws, please visit us at FHC0 online or call our free Hotline at 800/424-3247 Ext. 2.

How can iguanas, "hellos," and food stamps put you at risk?

You have likely been to fair housing programs or have read articles that dealt with the important topics of race, color, disability, children, national origin, sex, and religion. (And if that is not the case and you have any role or job in the housing industry, then stop reading this article now—not an easy statement for any author to make—and find a class on fair housing basics pronto.)

But these topics, albeit extremely important, are not the only ones out there. Through state laws and local ordinances, as well as through court cases, the civil rights of the Fair Housing Act continue to expand or are clarified. So here are some things that you may not know about. Even if there is just one topic below that is helpful to you, your reading of this article has been worth it.

Lions and tigers and bears, oh, my! You know a service animal is not a pet and that you must make reasonable accommodations for people who have a service animal (this usually relates to your pet policies). And while it is highly unlikely that lions, tigers, or bears will be the service animals brought to your community, keep in mind that not all service animals are dogs and cats. And those that are dogs may be providing assistance you never even thought of. From cases or in the news, service

animals that take us beyond the guide dog for the blind, or the cat for depression, include

- o Dogs assisting their humans who are diabetic (sensing changes in blood sugar levels);

- o Dogs providing a calming effect for children with FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome);

- o Miniature horses (as guide animals for the blind); this author has had two students in class that had guide horses at their communities;

- o An iguana assisting with depression.

Everyone poops! (Which, by the way, is the title of a children's book by Taro Gomi that celebrates a very natural process.) Lions, tigers, bears, dogs, cats, horses, and iguanas all poop. But when you reasonably accommodate a person with disabilities and their service animal poops, do you have to clean it up for them? Can you require that the person does this (or arranges to have it done)? The answer to this query is found in the Federal Register, Vol. 73, No. 208, Monday, October 27, 2008 at page 63836. You, however, don't have to look it up because this author will now quote from that as follows: "...a housing provider may establish reasonable rules in lease provisions requiring a person with a disability to pick up and dispose of his or her assistance animal's waste." Now, before we leave this intriguing topic, may I suggest to you Service Dog Central as a website resource to help you keep current on service dog issues.

Pet lovers protected too? Well, not yet. But there has been discussion in San Francisco (let's refrain from making any comment whatsoever about California) to consider a prohibition of housing discrimination against responsible pet owners. That bears watching.

Merhaba. If your community participates in the Project Based Section 8 program or if you receive HOME or CDBG funds, you are supposed to be compliant with HUD's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) guidelines. If you are not familiar with these, then wisdom would dictate you find out more

about this and proceed accordingly. <You can read up on the subject at www.FHCO.org/lep.htm.> Those of you at conventional communities have no FHA duty to those with LEP. But just because you don't have to do anything in this regard, it doesn't mean you shouldn't. Why? Prospects, applicants and residents for whom you facilitate based on language challenges are happy. Why do you care? Happy people don't sue you (or at least not as often as unhappy people, although for purposes of disclosure, let me point out that this has not been statistically established; i.e., I made it up). But to avoid some of the issues related to national origin (the usual basis for LEP) and to show your openness to folks from other places (great for mitigation in a worst case scenario, i.e., a fair housing lawsuit or charge), think about what you can do to make it easier for people with LEP. Ideas might include a work order board (residents point to a picture where they have a problem – a toilet, a sink, a door) or work order requests with visuals (think Clip Art) to check. By the way, *merhaba* means “hello” in Turkish.

Boy Meets Girl. (Or Boy Meets Boy, or Girl Meets Boy, or Girl Meets Girl) No matter the combination, such a scenario can lead to charges of sexual harassment. Why is this a fair housing topic? Because the victims of sexual harassment are chosen based on their gender, and gender is protected under the FHA. Many of the issues arise with maintenance personnel (who may be perpetrators or, as is often the case, victims of sexual harassment). Keeping in mind the vulnerability of your residents and your employees, there are questions you need to ask and decisions you need to make. Should your employees be allowed to date residents? Should your employees be allowed to socialize with residents? And while the topic here is sexual harassment, dating and socializing can lead to other fair housing issues if they lead to disparate treatment in the rental environment (such as the upset African American resident who feels that the maintenance man responds more promptly to her neighbor whom he is dating and who is white). Know the risks of such dating and socializing, know your tolerance for risk, and create your policies accordingly.

MyFace and SpaceBook. You may chuckle when you hear less-than-savvy folks talk about social media, but you may not know as much as you think you do when it comes to social media marketing and fair housing. Social media

marketing is a form of advertising and there are fair housing considerations. There are numerous and detailed articles out there about this, but here are a few things for you to consider:

- o Use the EHO logo: this is advertising!
- o Watch what you say: the same words that were taboo in print and online are still taboo in social media.
- o Watch who says it: diversity of spokespersons should be your goal.
- o Watch who you show: white-only advertising has been a sin since 1968; the days of Barbie® and Ken are long over.
- o Weigh your control of your social media site: more control can mean more fair housing liability.

Food Stamps. Should food stamps be counted toward income for rent qualification? The answer is “maybe.” If your community is located in an area that has a source of income protection <this is the case across Oregon>, there is the possibility that food stamps would be considered income. Would this be necessary as a reasonable accommodation if the recipient is getting food stamps based on disability? And finally, the philosophical question of “why not” count them?

Fair housing laws will continue to expand and will often be interpreted very broadly to protect the civil rights of those who live with you or wish to do so. You owe it to them and to yourself to always be aware of and in compliance with those laws that assure equal housing opportunity.

At the Fair Housing Council we offer detailed information about federal and state protected classes linked from the entry page of our site at www.FHCO.org. To check for local protections in the area you live, work, or own property visit www.FHCO.org/pdfs/matrix_ore.pdf or www.FHCO.org/pdfs/matrix_wash.pdf. And, as always, if you have fair housing questions, visit our site or call our free Hotline at 800/424-3247 Ext. 2.

This article brought to you by the Fair Housing Council; a nonprofit serving the state of Oregon and SW Washington. Learn more and / or sign up for our free, periodic newsletter at FHCO.org. "Fair Housing Focus" is written by Nadeen Green, Senior Counsel with For Rent Media Solutions™. The information contained in this article is not to be considered legal advice, and the author and For Rent Media Solutions strongly suggest that you consult with your own counsel as to any fair housing questions or problems you may have.

Qs about your rights and responsibilities under fair housing laws?

Visit www.FHCO.org or call 1-800-424-3247 Ext. 2.

Qs about this article? Want to schedule an in-office fair housing training program or speaker for corporate or association functions?

Contact Diane Hess, Education Director at dhess@FHCO.org or 800/424-3247 Ext. 108

Supra Lockbox Activity November 19-25, 2012

✘ This Week's Lockbox Activity

For the week of November 19-25, 2012, these charts show the number of times RMLS™ subscribers opened Supra lockboxes in Oregon and Washington. Compared to last week, the numbers decreased sharply in both Oregon and Washington.

For a larger version of each chart, visit the RMLS™ photostream on Flickr.

Supra Lockbox Activity November 19-25, 2012

This Week's Lockbox Activity

For the week of November 19-25, 2012, these charts show the number of times RMLS™ subscribers opened Supra lockboxes in Oregon and Washington. Compared to last week, the numbers decreased sharply in both Oregon and Washington.

For a larger version of each chart, visit the RMLS™ photostream on Flickr.

How Do You Get Trained? Subscriber Satisfaction Survey Results

This week, RMLS™ continues featuring subscriber feedback gleaned from our Subscriber Satisfaction Survey. (Check out our earlier posts: *How Are We Doing?* and *How Do You Interface with RMLS™?*)

If you discover something in *RMLSweb* that you'd like to learn more about, our trainers are ready to help. In addition to holding classes at RMLS™ offices around the region, our trainers regularly hold webinars, or we can come to you!

How did you receive training from RMLS™ in the past year?

Nearly one-third of survey respondents (31.5%) received RMLS™ training at their office. Training via phone came in closely at second (29.1%). Online tutorials came in third (26.9%). Just under a quarter of respondents (20.5%) have taken a class at an RMLS™ office.



How many times did you receive training from these methods in the last year?

The majority (49.8%) of respondents said they had accessed RMLS™ training once or twice in the past year. “None” came in second place (26.7%). And believe it or not, 33 people said they’ve used RMLS™ training 11 or more times in the past year!



Overall, were you satisfied with the training you received?

Our subscribers rated RMLS™ training a 3.7, just under halfway between “satisfied” and “delighted.”

What other types of training or topics would you like to see RMLS™ offer?

Naturally, answers to this question varied wildly. While RMLS™ may not offer a specific class each month, subscribers should keep an eye on the RMLSweb desktop and this blog. RMLS™ frequently posts training opportunities on the desktop, such as our upcoming Cloud CMA demonstration on December 7th. We also feature interesting classes on the RMLS™ blog once a month.

Subscriber comments:

- *“Time-saving features of any kind!”*
- *“Statistical analysis of MLS data.”*
- *“Statistics for appraisers, architectural styles, proper listing of living areas, and how to better inform your buyer*

(and appraisers) for agents and brokers.”

- *“Possibly more marketing-type classes to draw in new customers.”*
- *“Just basic training on things we use all the time and could use more efficiently if we had more training. Like DocuSign, Listing Load, Zip Forms, etc.”*
- *“Continuing education training.”* [Ed. note: check the RMLSweb desktop page! We post opportunities frequently.]
- *“We had a few classes by the RMLS™ instructor at our office that were very helpful. They reviewed how the website works. I always picked up something new from each of those classes.”*
- *“I would like to see more in Eugene. I haven’t seen anything yet that makes me want to drive to Portland.”*

Our series will wrap up next time with our subscribers’ overall experience with RMLS™.