WHAT'S INSIDE

• Online TIC Streamlines Process
• Homeownership Focus of Disability Forum
• HOME Again Doles Out Over $16 Million
• Website Makeover Makes Surfing Easier

WHAT'S COMING UP

Florida Housing Board of Directors Meeting
March 4, 2005
Wyndham Ft. Lauderdale Airport, Ft. Lauderdale

April 22, 2005
City Hall Commission Chambers, Tallahassee

Rental Programs
February 7, 2005
EHCL - Cycle Closes
February 16, 2005
Universal Cycle closes
February 28, 2005
EHCL - Issue Preliminary Scores

Homeownership Programs
February 9, 2005
Homeownership for People with Disabilities Workshop
1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.
227 North Bronough Street, Tallahassee
6th Floor Seltzer Room

February 22, 2005
HLP Rule Development Workshop
2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.
227 North Bronough Street, Tallahassee
6th Floor Seltzer Room

For more information, contact Florida Housing at 850-488-4197 or visit our web site at www.floridahousing.org.

HOUSING FORUM

Online TIC to Streamline Data Collection

Having a clear understanding of who we are serving is crucial in today's economic climate. Traditionally, we have collected demographic data through our Tenant Income Certification (TIC) form, which property managers transmit to us. Compiling that information and preparing a detailed demographic analysis across programs and properties proved sometimes cumbersome.

Two years ago, our information technology and housing program staff began working on a new system that would streamline our TIC reporting process. More importantly, we wanted a system that would allow us to capture more sophisticated data, including transportation, employment and other market characteristics.

I'm pleased to share that we are in the final testing stages of our new, online, TIC system. Under this new system, property managers will be uploading data online while compliance monitors will be verifying that data and sending reports to our database. With this new system, we have substantially increased our ability to query tenant and other information related to our properties.

This has truly been a collaborative process, and we appreciate the input from the property managers, compliance monitors and others during the development of this system.

Using new technology, not only to streamline our processes but make them more transparent, is one of our goals. The online TIC form is an indication of where we are headed.

Orlando Cabrera, Executive Director

Santini, Stultz Named Chairman, Vice Chairman

At its January meeting in Tampa, members of Florida Housing's Board of Directors elected Terry Santini as Chairman of the Board and Lynn Stultz as Vice Chairman. Santini serves as the former local government elected official on the Board and has been a member since 1999. Stultz, who is an At-Large representative on the Board, has been a member since 2003.

Florida Housing’s Board of Directors consists of the Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs, who is an ex officio, voting member and eight additional members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The board members serve four-year terms and are selected as representatives of various housing industry groups.

2005 Chairman, Terry Santini (right) and Vice Chairman, Lynn Stultz at a recent board meeting.
Bringing Families HOME Again

Florida Housing’s HOME Again Program continues to help homeowners rebuild after the devastating 2004 hurricane season. More than 30 local government and nonprofit applicants have received between $300,000 and $500,000 in financial assistance to disburse among eligible homeowners (those earning 80 percent of area median income or less). The money can be used for the repair, reconstruction or replacement of homes damaged during the storms.

The Corporation developed the program as part of its housing recovery efforts in 2004, and committed to provide up to $2.1 million statewide. Homeowners living in single family detached housing, condominium units, town homes, or manufactured housing units in counties severely impacted by the storms could receive up to $50,000 in repair or reconstruction assistance.

As part of its award process, Florida Housing identified 11 Tier 1 counties whose local government and nonprofit applicants could receive up to $500,000 to disburse. Tier 1 counties include: Brevard, Charlotte, De Soto, Escambia, Hardee, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Polk, St. Lucie, and Santa Rosa. All other counties are considered Tier 2 counties and their local government or nonprofit applicants could receive up to $300,000 to disburse.

Homeowners interested in applying for HOME Again assistance should contact their local government, nonprofit developer or other entity that has been awarded funds in their area. The following chart shows applicants that have been funded as of January 25, 2005. More current HOME Again details are available on Florida Housing’s website at www.floridahousing.org in the Disaster Relief section.

Toll Free Information Line Now Available: (866) 240-5702

Florida Housing Unveils 3% Cash Option

In addition to Florida Housing’s HAP, HOME and HAMI down payment assistance programs, the Corporation is unveiling a new Three Percent (3%) Cash Assistance option. This choice gives borrowers the ability to limit up front costs such as origination and discount fees, while paying a slightly higher interest rate on the first mortgage. The Three Percent Cash Assistance allows borrowers to apply three percent (3%) of the loan amount toward down payment and closing costs. The amount of assistance is calculated based on the first mortgage loan.

More than 250 Lenders Attend First Time Homebuyer Training

In December, Florida Housing’s First Time Homebuyer Program held local training on the corporation’s first and second mortgage programs. Attending were loan originators, underwriters, shippers and closer’s from across the state. Trained lenders who are approved and authorized to participate in the First Time Homebuyer Program serve as a point of contact for homebuyers. They also help homebuyers determine whether they are eligible to participate in the program, determine the mortgage, down payment and closing cost amounts, and process and close the loan.

The latest round of trainings occurred in Ft. Pierce, Orlando, Jacksonville, Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa and Tallahassee with 276 people in attendance.
New Online System Streamlines TIC Process

Florida Housing’s new online Tenant Income Certification (TIC) form, which will be implemented in the coming months, will streamline data entry for property managers and monitoring agents. At the same time, this new system will allow Florida Housing to run more detailed demographic reports and more closely identify how its properties are serving low-income families.

This new software system, which was developed by Florida Housing staff, is user-friendly and accessible online. The property manager or monitoring agent will first register with Florida Housing’s Extranet Portal. Once registered, the user is assigned the property manager or the monitoring agent role and granted certain access to specific property files in the system.

The property manager role entitles the user to complete the TIC form entirely online. The user has the ability to save their work and come back to finish it at a later time. The user can view a completed TIC at anytime thereafter.

The monitoring agent role entitles the user to view all TICs submitted from the properties assigned to that agent. The monitoring agent will be able to approve each TIC individually or in groups. If the monitoring agent identifies a discrepancy with an individual TIC, the agent can reject the TIC. This action automatically generates an email to the property manager, notifying them of the discrepancy and requesting a correction.

The Extranet Portal includes a solid help system for users, including context specific information as well as the ability to submit a help request online. The online TIC system is currently in the final phase of testing and should be available soon.

2005 Universal Cycle Timeline

- February 16, 2005: 2005 Cycle closes
- March 18, 2005: Issue Preliminary Scores
- March 28, 2005: NOPSEs due
- April 15, 2005: Issue NOPSE scores
- April 26, 2005: Cures due
- May 4, 2005: NOADs due
- May 25, 2005: Issue Final Scores & Notice of Rights
- Early-to-Mid July, 2005: Informal Appeal Hearings
- August 25-26, 2005: Board approves final ranking

The above schedule is tentative. All dates are subject to change.

NOPSE – Notice of Possible Scoring Error relative to another applicant’s application.
NOAD – Notice of Alleged Deficiency relative to another applicant’s score.
New Website Focuses on End User

Web users who logged on to www.floridahousing.org on January 18 found something new. The Corporation re-launched its online presence with a focus on the end user. Not only is the design of the site visually appealing, the new format makes finding information much easier.

Florida Housing identified its online audience and tailored its information toward those groups. Some of these groups include affordable housing developers, consumers looking to purchase a home or rent an affordable apartment unit, local governments, elected officials, Realtors, lenders and others.

The homepage is all new. Visual images and the Hot Topics and Streaming News areas are one example. Links to open funding cycles, disaster recovery updates and other time sensitive subjects reside in the Hot Topics section while Streaming News features audio and video files of the executive director’s speeches on affordable housing and other promotional news.

The main menu has been reformatted as well. Users will now be able to navigate to various programs more easily and find relevant information much more efficiently. The “About Us” section will help these users find corporate information, board meeting details, and financial statements. The “Business and Legal” section now offers links to current RFPs, RFQs, ITNs, and to pleadings and other legal actions. “Calendars and Notices” presents a comprehensive overview of activities, events, and recent notices occurring at the Corporation. These are just a few of the exciting new features associated with the homepage.

Program information is primarily available in the Developers section as well as in the Homebuyers and Renters section. Information relevant to local governments, lenders, Realtors and others can be found in the Housing Partners section.

For the latest news, program updates and other housing information, visit Florida Housing online at www.floridahousing.org.

Corporation Hosts 2nd Forum on Homeownership for People with Disabilities

As a follow-up to its August 2004 forum and in a continuing effort to expand its partnerships within the disability community, Florida Housing will host a second meeting on Homeownership for People with Disabilities. The forum will be held at Florida Housing on Wednesday, February 9 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Seltzer Room on the sixth floor.

Interested parties who are unable to attend in person can participate by phone. Contact Freyja Sutherland at freyja.sutherland@floridahousing.org for phone-in details. Written comments or suggestions should be mailed to Freyja at Florida Housing Finance Corporation, 227 North Bronough Street, Suite 5000, Tallahassee, Florida 32301-1329.

The August 2004 forum provided an opportunity for engaging dialogue on homeownership needs and options for people with disabilities. Florida Housing anticipates this upcoming meeting to be just as enlightening as it continues to explore ways of funding home purchases and modifications for people with disabilities.