MacArthur Foundation Grant Helps Preserve Aging Housing Stock in Florida

Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing), Florida Housing Coalition (FHC), and the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies at the University of Florida (Shimberg Center) are the recipients of a $1 million grant from the MacArthur Foundation to help improve and preserve affordable rental housing stock across the state.

The three organizations, known collectively as the Florida Partnership, were one of 12 nationwide recipients chosen for the award.

Florida Housing Executive Director Steve Auger says the award is an important piece of the puzzle in helping preserve aging affordable rental stock in Florida.

“Florida Housing Executive Director Steve Auger says the award is an important piece of the puzzle in helping preserve aging affordable rental stock in Florida. Auger says that many of these units are occupied by some of Florida’s most vulnerable residents—persons with disabilities and the elderly. During the next three years, Florida Housing will work in partnership with FHC and the Shimberg Center to build capacity of non-profit organizations to carry out preservation transactions. “Working in partnership with the Coalition and Shimberg Center, we are striving to preserve 20,000 at-risk rental units by 2019, which is about one-third of Florida’s oldest units,” Auger said. “We’ll do this by providing non-profit developers with intensive technical assistance and enhanced housing market data to help them in their preservation decisions.”

Anne Ray, assistant researcher with the Shimberg Center, echoed Auger’s comments on the need to preserve these precious units.

Florida Housing continues to ‘Go Green’

Carlisle Development Group recently broke ground on Sea Grape Apartments in Marathon—the heart of the Florida Keys. The new 84-unit apartment complex will bring much needed affordable rental options for area residents.

“Sea Grape Apartments provide a truly affordable opportunity for working families to continue enjoying the beauty of living in the Keys,” said Ken Naylor, senior developer with the Carlisle Development Group.

The units also will serve essential service personnel, such as teachers, seasonal workers, police officers, firefighters and governmental employees. Naylor referred to these workers as the “backbone” of his community.

Florida Housing provided a total of $5,960,000 in State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program funding, as well as $843,500 in competitive (9%) Housing Credits for Phases I and II.

Additional financing for the development was provided by Wachovia Bank ($16,000,000), Neighborhood Lending Partners ($2,400,000) and Monroe County Land Authority ($930,000).

Naylor says the affordable rental options couldn’t have come at a better time for Monroe County. Median rental rates in the area increased by 46 percent between 2000 and 2007. As a result, during that period, the Keys lost 8 percent of its family households.

“Sea Grape is an important step toward correcting that imbalance and, therefore, will have an extremely positive impact on the quality of life of Marathon residents,” Naylor said.

Several local VIPs—including city and county officials, Monroe County Mayor George Neugent and Marathon Councilmember Pete Worthington—were in attendance for the groundbreaking on Wednesday, April 1.

Sea Grape Brings Affordable Housing to the Florida Keys

(continued on page 4)
Golden Square and Golden Villas Add Affordable Housing to Pompano Beach

New Affordable Residences Fill Critical Need

by Leslie J. Backus, APR

The mission of the Housing Authority of Pompano Beach (HAPB) is to provide safe, decent and sanitary housing for eligible families. Formed in 1956, the HAPB currently assists more than 1,100 families in securing quality affordable housing. As a public service agency, the HAPB is committed to providing service to program participants and the community at large.

About Pinnacle Housing Group

Pinnacle Housing Group is the recognized industry leader in providing first-class affordable housing communities in Florida’s urban core and suburban areas. In 2009, Affordable Housing Finance magazine, one of the industry’s top publications, to note Pinnacle Housing Group as “one of Florida’s most successful developers in revitalizing Florida’s urban communities.” Pinnacle’s portfolio of rental housing units (completed and under construction) has risen to over 5,000 units and continues to grow from the State’s Panhandle to southern Miami-Dade County.

About the Housing Authority of Pompano Beach (HAPB)

The Housing Authority of Pompano Beach, in partnership with Pinnacle Housing Group, has opened Golden Square and Golden Villas in Pompano Beach. The redevelopment is a precedent-setting effort by the Housing Authority of Pompano Beach (HAPB) to reinvent its rental housing portfolio.

The site has been owned by HAPB for more than 50 years. In 2005, Hurricane Wilma significantly damaged buildings that were beyond repair. The development was of the projects adversely affected by the Emergency Rule may be able to use LIHTC or funding provided through one of these programs to move forward. Florida Housing is awaiting further regulatory direction from the federal Housing and Urban Development department (HUD) and national Treasury, and will hold rule development workshops to hear public comments regarding these programs prior to developing the rule that will govern program implementation.

As we approach mid-2009, there are still significant challenges we all will face. Through it all, Florida Housing will continue to work diligently and prudently to provide affordable homeownership and rental opportunities for our citizens. We’re grateful for each of our partners and look forward to our continued work together.

Steve P. Auger, Executive Director
Florida Housing Finance Corporation

WHAT’S Developing
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ART & PRODUCTION: Senior Graphic Designer Jennifer Stern

Florida Housing was created by the Florida Legislature more than 50 years ago to help our fellow Floridians obtain safe, decent affordable housing that might otherwise be unavailable to them. Today, Florida Housing continues its mission by increasing affordable housing opportunities and ensuring that its programs are well matched to the needs of those we serve. We know that we cannot accomplish our mission alone. As such, we continue to work with local governments, non-profits, elected officials and others to help spread the importance of affordable housing in Florida’s communities.

[Image: A page from a magazine featuring an article about affordable housing in Florida, with a focus on the Housing Authority of Pompano Beach and Pinnacle Housing Group. The article highlights the opening of Golden Square and Golden Villas in Pompano Beach, which provide new affordable housing options for the community.]
The idea of going green—becoming environmentally friendly, reducing carbon footprints—has become common practice for many people, companies and organizations across the country. Now, more than ever, people are keenly aware of the affects their bad habits have on the planet... and they are starting to make strides to improve them.

What is ‘Going Green?’

“Going green” is a phrase that refers to the adaption of practices that reduce our overall negative impact on the environment. These practices include reducing energy usage by simple actions like turning off lights and shutting down computers when not in use. Recycling, using public transportation and purchasing locally produced products also are examples of going green. Some people are taking “going green” to a larger scale by designing and renovating their homes to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Florida Housing’s approach to ‘Going Green’

In population rankings, Florida is the fourth largest state in the country. As the state’s housing finance agency (HFA), Florida Housing is committed to our role in social responsibility for affordable housing development and preservation; as such, we are actively exploring new options to incorporate green best practices in our efforts to fulfill our mission of providing safe, decent affordable housing to Florida’s citizens. Minimizing our impact on the environment and reducing our carbon footprint is important to us!

“Finding new and innovative ways to reduce our negative impact on the environment is not only our social responsibility, but also demonstrates to our consumers that we care about the Florida we leave behind,” said Steve Auger, Florida Housing’s executive director. “As we are implementing green efforts into our operations and program implementation, we encourage our partners to go green by implementing green building practices, as well.”

Going green has financial benefits

Green practices not only help to preserve the environment, but also can have financial benefits. “Our nation and state are facing significant financial challenges. Florida Housing has proactively made strategic choices that financially benefit the Corporation.”

Consider this: Florida Housing receives hundreds of public records requests every year. The current practice of responding to these requests can, at times, involve massive amounts of paper. To reduce our carbon footprint, increase efficiency and “save a tree,” Florida Housing is in the process of transferring all public documents to a new online portal.

“If consumers are able to view their housing documents online, eventually there will seldom be a need for us to print documents in-house, which helps us save in the end,” said Nathan Sinclair, enterprise solutions engineer for Florida Housing; he has been working on this new online document project for the Corporation.

Compiling public records online will save Florida Housing hundreds of dollars per year on printing and mailing costs, and it will allow consumers instant access to documents, which creates a more efficient public agency. In addition, for the first time ever, Florida Housing’s annual report was produced as an online publication, with fewer than 200 CDs being distributed to the Governor, Cabinet and members of the state Legislature. The less than 20 printed versions of the report were printed on 100 percent recycled paper. This simple effort has reduced the Corporation’s printing costs by nearly half already this year.

“When it comes to going green, every small step counts,” Auger said. “When combined, the small changes can result in big changes for our planet.”

In addition to Florida Housing making changes to its internal practices, programmatic changes have been made to implement green building requirements for affordable housing development. These changes will help save consumers’ money while benefiting the environment, too. By requiring green building standards for developments that use funding provided through Florida Housing, more energy-efficient homes will be produced. This results in significant savings in consumers’ utility bills. As of January 1 this year, Florida Housing requires green building features to be incorporated in properties purchased using many of our loan products.

Green features require builders and homeowners to be environmentally conscious. Nicole Gibson, homeownership program administrator in the Single Family program office, said, “Going green is helpful in many ways. Not only can homeowners see the positive changes in their lower utility costs, but they are also helping to reduce their ‘carbon footprints.”

Going green contributes to the environment

Changing personal and business habits and practices will not reverse the damage already done to our Planet Earth overnight. However, the beauty of ‘going green’ is that the “baby steps” taken toward changing the way we do what we do now will result in a healthier, cleaner and more beautiful future for the generations to come. Florida Housing is committed to green living and humbly accepting our role to help better our environment.

How you can ‘Go Green’

Check out Florida Housing’s “Going Green” tips in this and future issues of What’s Developing newsletter.

Brandi Hunt is communications intern at Florida Housing Finance Corporation. For more information, visit the Corporation’s Web site at www.floridahousing.org.
The community of Dixie Court, located in Ft. Lauderdale, looks drastically different today than it once did. Originally built in 1938, it once was the place many prominent African Americans called home.

Over the years, its prestigious distinction took a hit as crime, drug activity and substandard housing grew. Now, the city is hoping to revitalize the area, starting with safe and affordable housing for area residents. Officials say this revitalization begins with Dixie Courts.

Carlisle Development Group, along with county and city officials, recently celebrated the grand opening of the new development and say they're happy to play a role in the area’s rebirth.

“We are very happy to be a part of the redevelopment of the historic Dixie Court community,” said Matthew S. Greer, chief executive officer of the Carlisle Development Group.

He says the new development, settled along a major thoroughfare, is a key in redevelopment of the entire area.

“Broward Boulevard is a major artery in Ft. Lauderdale, and Dixie Court is an example of how affordable housing can improve local property values and accelerate the area’s revitalization,” Greer said.

Tam English, executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of Ft. Lauderdale, hopes that this, as well as future developments, will be a catalyst for change for the historic community.

“Dixie Court is the first of many properties [in the city] that we plan to revitalize and redevelop,” she said.

Financing for both phases consists of various Florida Housing programs. Phase I used $1,252,220 in competitive (9%) Housing Credits and $1,025,000 acquired through the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program. Additionally, Phase II received $5,546,305 through the Rental Recovery Loan Program (RRLP), $4,750,000 in Multifamily Bonds, and $260,000 in non-competitive (4%) Housing Credits.

These credits will be allocated annually during a 10-year period, effectively resulting in total allocations of $10,250,000 and $2,600,000, respectively.

A third phase of Dixie Court, scheduled to be completed in late 2009, will bring an additional 100 affordable rental units to the area.

Carlisle spokespersons say that so far, approximately 50 percent of the units in Phases I and II have been leased. Monthly rental rates will range from $400 to $1,110, depending on the size of the unit and the tenant’s income.

Designers also were careful to protect the area’s rich history when developing the new complex. As such, a permanent exhibit of photographs from the 1930s through the present that chronicle the area’s major events, struggles, and growth will be on display in the clubhouse and common areas including in the senior building. Also, the original development’s flagpole and circular bench from the ’30s will be on display near the senior center.

Carlisle spokespersons say that so far, approximately 50 percent of the units in Phases I and II have been leased. Monthly rental rates will range from $400 to $1,110, depending on the size of the unit and the tenant’s income.

Once completed, the development will include a community clubhouse, library, playground, car care center, gazebo picnic area, central laundry facilities, controlled access gated entry and a domino court.

Monthly rental rates will start at $250 for one-bedrooms units, $319 for two-bedrooms units and $395 for three-bedrooms units. Tenant applicants must meet specific affordable housing income guidelines, and units will be set aside at 30, 45 and 60 percent of the area median income (AMI). For a family of four in Monroe County, the AMIs are as follows: 30 percent - $21,250; 45 percent - $31,905; and 60 percent - $42,540 (2008 HUD data).
affordable rental rates, which range from $213 to $700 per month. Carlisle representatives say that it’s these rates, coupled with the unique offerings of the complex, that make the units so desirable.

“Morris Court is a tremendous opportunity for us to provide a unique rental housing community that is typically reserved for market-rate housing,” Greer said.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation’s (Florida Housing) funding for Phase II includes $5,346,305 through the Rental Recovery Loan Program (RRLP), in addition to $4,750,000 in Multifamily Bonds. Florida Housing also allocated $260,000 in non-competitive (4%) Housing Credits to help infuse equity into the development.

Morris Court III offers 50 apartments for the elderly, and very affordable rental rates from $213 to $327 monthly. Carlisle representatives say that this development provides local seniors the opportunity to live close to their families, while being secluded from the nearby busy streets of Pensacola.

Florida Housing’s funding for Phase III includes $1,730,000 in competitive (9%) Housing Credits.

Local officials took a moment to share in some of the excitement this new development brings to their community.

“Partnering with Carlisle Development Group, we were able to raise nearly $27 million and leverage multiple state, local, and private funding sources to defy the growing challenges in today’s financial market and bring this much needed affordable housing project to fruition,” said Mike Rogers, executive director of the Area Housing Commission.

Unlike many of the affordable housing developments throughout Florida, Morris Court’s new “urbanism” design provides pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and front porches, which—developers believe—promotes a true sense of community. Other amenities include a community clubhouse, exercise room, computer lab with a Wii® video game system, library and playground.

Resident programs include financial counseling, health care and job training.

Late last year, The Gatehouse Group, Inc. and The Carrie Meek Foundation, together with Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami, celebrated the opening of Lafayette Plaza Apartments, located at 145 NE 78th Street in Miami, during a special ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Lafayette Plaza’s construction cost totals $33,825,899. It is the second phase of a two-phase development; the first phase was completed and occupied earlier last year.

Gatehouse Group is a Boston-based developer and owner of seven affordable developments in Miami-Dade County.

Lafayette Plaza Apartments is a 136-unit complex, and is convenient to downtown employment centers, schools, medical care, places of worship, shopping and entertainment. With Miami-Dade Transit bus service at its doorstep, residents of Lafayette Plaza are just minutes from North Miami Beach and the Design District.

“Lafayette Apartments is dedicated to providing a high-quality affordable housing opportunity for working families and singles [in] Miami-Dade County,” said Marc Pstruments, president of The Gatehouse Group, Inc. “In addition, we are committed to meeting the educational and social needs of our residents, and assisting them with job skills training.”

The one-, two- and three-bedroom units rent for $329 to $840 per month to families earning between $11,610 and $36,180 per year. Apartment residents will benefit from a broad range of home-living amenities, including a community center, computer lab education center with a library, fitness center, youth center, “tot lot,” car care area, covered picnic area, and on-site laundry facilities.

Every Lafayette Plaza Apartment home is equipped with washer and dryer hookups, decorator-designed kitchens, tile flooring, garbage disposals, highly efficient air conditioning, ceiling fans, custom mini-blinds and cable television hookup access.

Lafayette Plaza Apartments Opens its Doors in Miami

More than three years after Hurricanes Dennis and Ivan decimated Escambia County, affordable rental options in the City of Pensacola are at a premium. Many residents who were displaced after the storms have struggled to find decent, safe, affordable housing.

Luckily, some of these individuals now have a new place to call home. Morris Courts II and III recently opened for business and area residents couldn’t be more excited.

Matt Greer, chief executive officer of Carlisle Development Group, says that these units will go a long way in providing safe, affordable housing.

Unlike many of the affordable housing developments throughout Florida, Morris Court’s new “urbanism” design provides pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and front porches, which—developers believe—promotes a true sense of community. Other amenities include a community clubhouse, exercise room, computer lab with a Wii® video game system, library and playground.

Resident programs include financial counseling, health care and job training.

Florida Housing welcomes Len Tylka and Cliff Hardy to its Board of Directors. Appointed by Gov. Charlie Crist, Tylka and Hardy’s terms both began on March 19, 2009.

Tylka, of West Palm Beach, is a successful, second-generation custom single-family home builder and developer, having professional experience since 1971. He is the founding principal of LTL Associates, Inc., a professional engineering firm, and LTL Builders, a statewide certified general contractor. He also is the past president of the Gold Coast Builders Association and the Florida Home Builders Association, having served as a senior officer in both organizations.

Hardy retired from First Housing in 2004 after serving as its president for 25 years. Prior to starting First Housing in 1979, he was involved in low-income housing as executive director of the Tampa Housing Authority and executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of Raleigh, NC.

Cliff is married to Judy Morris-Hardy, and has four children and nine grandchildren. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Elon University and a master’s degree from the University of North Carolina.

New Employees

Sue Early, Special Coordinator
Multifamily Preservation Initiative

Maria McCreless, Records Manager
This Soldier and His Family Have a Place to Call Home

Jonathan Prieto, a U.S. Army soldier, recently bought his first home using Florida Housing’s “Florida HEROs” program and $10,000 in down payment assistance. “The process took several months [when] a short sale he was purchasing fell through,” said Lois Healy-Sparks, loan officer with BB&T. “But, he found a home he actually liked the second time around.”

Surprisingly enough, Jonathan was not the first in his family to buy a home using Healy-Sparks. She also helped his parents find a house in 2005. “In 2004, [Prieto’s] family, Sara Feliciano and Hector Villameuva and their three children, came to me wanting to purchase their first home,” said Healy-Sparks. “I introduced them to an affordable builder who designed the home to meet their family’s needs, and helped them by discussing the issues on their credit and how to fix them.” In April 2005, his parents moved into their first home.

Moreover, Healy-Sparks also helped Jonathan’s aunt and uncle, Albert and Jennifer Feliciano, purchase their home in August 2006. The City of Fort Myers ended up donating the land to the builder who built both of the homes. After watching his parents, his aunt and uncle, and their children purchase homes, Prieto decided it was time to purchase a home of his own. He was able to close on his three-bedroom, two-bathroom, 2,138 square-foot-home in Lehigh Acres shortly thereafter.

Healy-Sparks has been an approved lender with Florida Housing since 2003. Through her hard work and dedication, she has been able to help a number of Floridians purchase their first homes. When asked why she likes helping Floridians achieve homeownership, Lois simply replied as follows:

For many years, I struggled as a single mother with two small children living in apartment after apartment, worrying about never having a real home for my children to live in. I was never told, nor did I ever hear about, any of these programs being available to help me and my family get into a home. When I started as a loan officer in 2002, I had worked for a builder as a sales and marketing representative, and researched these programs for our clientele so we could help them get into the affordable homes we were building. One of the banks that I was using at the time approached me to do the same thing, but in the reverse—find clients to use these programs who were looking to purchase a home. I have been helping clients through this program—and programs like it since then.

I find family stability is based on parents and the home they provide for their children; if a family has no roots—no where to actually call home—it can affect how children view the world and how they turn out. Luckily my children turned out fine, but that is not always the case.

For more information on Florida Housing's homeownership programs, click on the First Time Homebuyer Wizard at www.floridahousing.org, or contact Single Family Program staff at (850) 488-4197.

TLC Celebrates 15 Years of Service and Building Its 50th Home

The Tallahassee Lenders Consortium (TLC) is celebrating 15 years of affordable housing services, along with building its 49th and 50th homes in the Big Bend Area.

The new homeowners, Barbara Howard and Dwayne Whitaker, were in attendance to cut the ribbon on their houses during the celebration. “They educated me. They took the time to break it down and help me understand,” Whitaker said of the home-buying process.

Each home is Energy Star certified, has four bedrooms, two bathrooms and approximately 1,300 square feet. Since its founding in 1993, TLC has been one of the leaders in North Florida in providing comprehensive homebuyer education, mortgage lending, and down payment and closing assistance to low- and moderate-income families, in addition to providing foreclosure counseling.

To help further its goals, TLC made the transition from assisting homebuyers to building communities by achieving recognition as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), which is a private, non-profit, community-based service organization that has staff capacity to build affordable housing for the community it serves. For the last 15 years, TLC has been able to build affordable housing throughout Tallahassee. The organization also is responsible for building Phases I, II, and III of the City of Tallahassee’s Infill Housing Program, and much more.

The Tallahassee Lenders Consortium (TLC) is a non-profit organization with a mission to improve people’s ability to obtain safe, decent affordable housing. TLC provides information and education regarding credit counseling and the process of purchasing a home to very low- and low-income individuals. In addition, the Consortium administers Leon County’s and City of Tallahassee’s Down Payment Assistance Programs, and assists local lenders in making affordable loans by processing, underwriting and packaging these loans. For more information, visit www.tallahasseeleads.org.

Bond Financial Update

In respect to the 2008 Series 4 issue that closed on November 25, 2009, Fitch Ratings, Inc. (Fitch); Moody’s Investors Service (Moody’s); and Standard & Poor’s Ratings Services, a division of The McGraw-Hill Corporation (S&P), have assigned the 2008 Series 4 Bonds ratings of “AA+,” “Aa1” and “AA+,” respectively.

Depending on the market, Florida Housing expects close the next bond issue in June 2009.

Upcoming Lender & Realtor Training Opportunities

Attention Realtor Associations! The Realtor CE Course, titled “Affordable Housing Solutions: What Every Realor Should Know,” is offered in partnership with various Realtor associations throughout the state. Licensed Florida Realtors may receive three (3) CE credits for completion of the course.

May 20 ........................ Realor Training
Greater Fort Myers and the Beaches
Fort Myers
9:00 a.m. to noon

To determine if your organization is eligible to participate in Florida Housing’s First Time Homebuyer Program, e-mail Nyankor Matthew at nyankor.matthew@floridahousing.org or Charles White at charles.white@floridahousing.org. For more information about our programs, visit www.floridahousing.org.

If you are interested in attending or hosting a course, contact Charles White at Florida Housing at (850) 488-4197 or via e-mail at charles.white@floridahousing.org.

Leading Lenders & Lending Institutions

Each quarter, Florida Housing congratulates top-producing lenders for the First Time Homebuyer Program. Based on various stages in the origination process, this quarter’s winners are as follows:

The Top Three Loan Officers:

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<th>Loan Officer</th>
<th>Lender</th>
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<tr>
<td>Molly Coberly</td>
<td>Shelter Mortgage LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Hand</td>
<td>Countrywide Home Loans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pat Gevar</td>
<td>BB&amp;T</td>
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Top Three Lending Institutions:

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<tr>
<td>SunTrust Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>National City Mortgage</td>
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Florida Housing Expands Online Affordable Rental Housing Locator

Service offers real-time rental information, allowing property owners to list available housing for FREE

Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) recently announced its newly expanded free, web-based rental housing locator service—www.FloridaHousingSearch.org. This Web site links people with affordable and available rental housing throughout Florida.

FloridaHousingSearch.org allows landlords, including providers of critically needed supportive and special needs housing, to advertise their properties FREE of charge, while helping renters to easily find properties that fit their needs. Through a partnership with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, FloridaHousingSearch.org also includes a separate search engine for locating assisted-living facilities and adult family-care homes.

When the site first launched in 2006, it featured only properties funded by Florida Housing or those located in Hillsborough and Miami-Dade counties. Now, FloridaHousingSearch.org features affordable rental units at properties located throughout the state.

This expanded housing locator service will allow landlords of all private and publicly funded properties statewide to list rental units that are affordable for households that earn up to 120 percent of the average area median income (AMI). Currently, FloridaHousingSearch.org has more than 117,000 affordable rental units registered, of which approximately 10,000 units are listed as available.

"Through this expanded locator Web site, information on Florida's rental units can now be kept in one place, with searchable criteria to make finding available and affordable rental housing easier than ever before," said Steve Auger, executive director of Florida Housing. "With the support of state agencies, local governments and community stakeholders, we have a goal of registering at least another 100,000 units by this time next year."

Each month, nearly 90,000 searches are conducted through FloridaHousingSearch.org and more than 5,000 calls are handled by the locator's toll-free call-center.

"We want the locator to serve as an invaluable tool for families, elderly persons or households with special needs that are searching for affordable rental housing in their communities," Auger said. "The expansion of this service is particularly important during these tough economic times, but also in planning ahead to serve displaced persons during other crises, such as natural disasters. We encourage all property owners to input their affordable rental units to help make this site as useful as possible."

FloridaHousingSearch.org was developed and is managed by Socialserve.com®, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit company dedicated to serving the affordable housing needs of communities.

The public can search FloridaHousingSearch.org (in English or Spanish) for available properties and rental units 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or by calling the toll-free, bilingual search support call center at 1-(877) 428-8844, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EST).

Search and result features include the following:

• City, county, street address and/or zip code;
• Number of bedrooms;
• Telephone number for leasing agent;
• Rent amount;
• Section 8 acceptance;
• Proximity to public transit;
• Utilities included;
• Target populations, such as the elderly and persons with disabilities;
• Specific accessibility features; and
• Map links and pictures.

For more information on FloridaHousingSearch.org, please visit the Web site, or you may contact Socialserve.com at 1-(877) 428-8844 or via e-mail at info@socialserve.com.
“Our estimates show that over 900,000 low-income households in Florida rent their housing,” she said. “For their sake, preservation of the state’s existing affordable rental housing is crucial.”

The Shimbler Center will use its share of the grant to develop enhanced data tools to help the state, non-profits and local governments make decisions about the communities and properties most in need of preservation efforts.

Jamie Ross, president of the Florida Housing Coalition, expressed thanks for the award and reiterated the importance of preserving this valuable housing stock.

“We are so thrilled to receive this substantial grant from the MacArthur Foundation,” she said. “We applauded the Foundation for its vision and its leadership in the preservation of rental housing.”

Ross says that being chosen as one of 12 recipients of this grant speaks volumes about the preservation work currently being done in Florida.

“To be chosen [for this award] is to be acknowledged as being innovative and an effective organization [in preservation efforts],” she said.

Ross also commented on the important role the three entities play in preserving these precious units.

“The partnership structure of this MacArthur grant is the recipe for success in preserving affordable housing in Florida,” she said.

The Florida Partnership will use the $1,000,000 investment by the MacArthur Foundation in a coordinated preservation effort as follows:

- The Coalition will use its $475,000 grant to educate non-profits and local governments about preservation strategies and how to access funding; it will also provide key non-profit developers with more than 200 hours of technical support on specific projects;
- The Shimbler Center will use its $500,000 grant to develop enhanced data tools that will allow non-profits, local governments and the state to make far-sighted preservation decisions;
- Florida Housing’s plan is to offer demonstration funds to non-profit and for-profit developers for the rehabilitation of aging privately owned properties with expiring subsidies; as such, the balance of the grant funding ($250,000) will be used to support peer networking activities for this purpose.

The MacArthur Foundation investment—$9.5 million in grants and an additional $32 million in low-interest loans—is part of its “Window of Opportunity” initiative, which is a 10-year, $150 million effort to: (1) coordinate preservation efforts and target places most in need of intervention, (2) track the state of rental housing, (3) preserve homes before buildings become run-down, and (4) leverage more than $147 million in other funding.

“Florida’s emphasis on building the capacity of local and regional non-profits to preserve affordable rental housing will help the state particularly meet the housing needs of low-wage workers and seniors,” said MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton. 

### HUD GREEN RETROFIT PROGRAM FOR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Implemented by Housing Notice H-09-02 published May 13, 2009**

$250 million in loans and grants for energy and green retrofits in the multifamily assisted housing stock; creates green collar jobs. Improves property operations by reducing utility expenses; benefits resident health and the environment.

**Energy and Green Retrofit Investments**

Up to $15,000 per residential unit (with an expected average of $10,000/unit) to reduce energy costs (e.g., more efficient heating and cooling systems), reduce water use (e.g., low-flow faucets and toilets), improve indoor environmental quality (e.g., low-VOC products), and provide other environmental benefits (e.g., materials with recycled content, reflective roofing to reduce heat-island effects, etc).

**Program Volume**

Estimate funding about 25,000 units (approx 300-350 properties).

**Implementation**

Accept applications starting June 15, 2009; begin obligating funds by September 2009, and owners begin making improvements immediately thereafter (and owners must complete work within two years).

**Eligible Properties**

- Must receive HUD project-based assistance:
  - Section 8
  - 202-811 Elderly/Disabled Housing

**Funding Buckets**

Initial applications will be allocated to project categories for Section 202, Section 811, USDA Section 515, and other Section 8 projects based on a pro rata representation of each property type among the universe of eligible properties. Further, limitations will be placed on projects under common ownership or control, and projects within any one of the 10 HUD regions.

**Underwriting Criteria**

Applications must pass an initial feasibility based on underwriting criteria consistent with origination of each project type, that uses the last three years’ financials, applies a vacancy/rent loss factor, applies a common reserve deposit requirement, and requires a minimum debt service coverage and operating expense cushion. After passing initial feasibility, HUD will underwrite each project to determine feasibility.

**Processing Timeline**

HUD expects most Green Retrofit transactions to close within 120 days of being assigned for processing.

**Owner Incentives**

- Pre-development Incentive: 1% of Green Retrofits not to exceed $10,000
- Energy Efficiency Incentive: 3% of Green Retrofits not to exceed $30,000
- Targeted Job Creation Incentive (optional): up to $25,000
- Incentive Performance Fee: 3% of collected revenue annually

**Owner Commitments**

- Use agreement for 15 years beyond existing use restricted period
- Green rehab and green replacements for life of use agreement
- Green maintenance
- Recycling/hazardous waste/landfill diversion
- Discounts, rebates and commissions to project account
- Resident involvement, outreach and incentive plan
- Integrated pest management plan
- Green research cooperation
- Green property management training

For more information visit http://portal.hud.gov.