GOVERNOR SCOTT SIGNS HOUSING BILLS

The 2013 legislative session concluded on May 3, with Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) pursuing one legislative proposal this year to address several key issues related to the Corporation. Representative Daniel Davis (District 15-Jacksonville) was the House sponsor of HB 437 and Senator Wilton Simpson (District 18-Tribby) was the Senate sponsor of SB 928. We are grateful to our sponsors and their staff for their work to move the legislation to final passage. The House version of the bill was signed by the Governor Rick Scott on May 30.

One of the key components contained in the final bill is the repeal of the 2009 expansion of the charitable ad valorem tax exemption for affordable housing. This language also was passed in the Senate tax package (SB 1830) and applies to the 2013 tax roll.

Additionally, HB 437 authorizes Florida Housing to allocate its multifamily resources (consisting of low-income housing tax credits, non-taxable revenue bonds, and State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program funds] through competitive solicitations. To this end, the legislation also helps to tackle the challenge of developing affordable housing in the Florida Keys and gives Florida Housing the express authority to help address that problem. The Corporation will use 5 percent of its annual allocation of multifamily resources for high-priority affordable housing developments and reserve an additional 5 percent for rental developments to serve persons with a disabling condition.

Information contained in Florida Housing's Annual Report was augmented to enhance the information provided to the Legislature, the Governor, and the public, in addition to changing the due date of the report from the last day in February (following the calendar year close out on December 31) to June 30. It also codified practice currently in place regarding compliance reporting for our audited financial statements, as well as, clarified in statute that the Corporation’s travel reimbursement rate shall not exceed the state’s reimbursement rate. The legislation also provides that the Auditor General conduct an operational audit of Florida Housing and provide a written report to the Speaker of the House and Senate President by December 1, 2016.

On June 4, Governor Scott signed SB 1852, related to the National Mortgage Settlement. This legislation allocated $120 million in funding to Florida Housing, as follows:

- $50 million for the SAIL program--$25 million for elderly housing and $25 million for extremely low-income housing;
- $10 million for the SAIL program-with 10--25 percent for persons developmental disabilities housing;

GOVERNOR RICK SCOTT SIGNS SB 1852

Governor Rick Scott signs SB 1852
$40 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program—with targeted strategies to use 20 percent for persons with development disabilities housing;

$10 million for competitive grants for homeless housing; and

$10 million for competitive grant for persons with developmental disabilities housing.

"HOUSE THE HOUSE BUILT" EVENT

In March, Florida Housing staff attended the "House The House Built" event for Tallahassee resident Cookie Ashby. The idea was spearheaded by Representative Richard Corcoran (District 37-Lutz) and logistically planned by Representative Daniel Davis (District 15-Jacksonville), executive director of the Northeast Florida Builder Association (and sponsor of Florida Housing's legislative proposal bill). In one week, a Habitat for Humanity home was built for Ashby and her family, with the help of Florida House of Representative members, who raised funds and provided manual labor, and several local business/organizations that provided supplies and services. Jerry Linder, from JL Linder Group, was the project manager for the build. Florida Housing was pleased to be able to attend the event, and support the elected officials and stakeholders as they presented Ashby with the keys to her home.

MAKING HOME AFFORDABLE® INTAKE AND OUTREACH PROJECT

In February 2009, the Obama Administration introduced the Making Home Affordable® (MHA) Program to help stabilize the housing market, and to assist struggling homeowners to obtain relief and avoid foreclosure. In an effort to ensure that every potentially eligible borrower has the opportunity to be considered for foreclosure prevention assistance under the MHA® program, the US Department of Treasury (Treasury) is working with NeighborWorks® America (NeighborWorks) to leverage its network of local housing counseling agencies. These agencies will conduct outreach to identify borrowers who are potentially eligible for the Home Affordable Modification Program® (HAMP) and then, work with these borrowers to complete and submit a HAMP® request for mortgage assistance package. This effort is referred to as the "MHA Outreach and Intake Project."

To this end, Florida Housing was awarded approximately $231,000 to help identify and submit HAMP® requests for mortgage assistance packages for Florida homeowners who may benefit from the program. Approximately 37 counseling agencies are eligible to carry out the counseling and outreach activities throughout the state. This project has an expedited implementation period that ends December 31, 2013.

2013 RENTAL MARKET STUDY RELEASED

The Shimberg Center for Housing Studies at the University of Florida, Gainesville, recently released the 2013 Rental Market Study on behalf of Florida Housing. The study describes the housing needs of low-income renters in Florida, and the special housing needs of elderly residents, homeless persons, persons with disabilities, farmworkers and fishing workers.

Key findings as follows:

- More Floridians are renting. From 2005 to 2011, the number of renters grew by 10

FLORIDA HOUSING HELPS PANAMA COMMONS CELEBRATE ITS LEED PLATINUM AWARD

Everyone deserves a safe, decent and affordable place in which to live. This past April, The Paces Foundation—a southeastern environmental affordable housing developer and non-profit organization—hosted an award ceremony to celebrate the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification award for Panama Commons, a multifamily, affordable living complex for families located in Panama City, Florida.

The new construction has 92 units and adheres to LEED's high standards for green building, which includes everything from lots of open light areas, to native landscaping, to appliances that are all ENERGY STAR® rated to help families save money on utilities. Kevin Tatreau, director of Multifamily Program at Florida Housing rendered comments.
percent, while the number of homeowners dropped by 3 percent. Homeownership is particularly down for the "under age 35" households and families with children.

- **Rents are up, incomes are down.** From 2000 to 2011, the statewide median rent increased from $816 to $950 per month, while median renter income fell from $34,000 to $30,343 per year (2011 dollars).

- **Rental need is growing.** The number of low-income (<=60% AMI), cost-burdened (> 40% of income for rent) renter households in Florida rose from 553,035 in 2005 to 710,790 in 2011, and to an estimated 737,435 in 2013. Of these, 59 percent live in large counties, 37 percent live in medium counties, and 4 percent live in small counties.

- **Most cost-burdened households are small.** Sixty-one (61) percent have one-two members; 28 percent have three-four members; and 10 percent include five or more members.

- **More than one-fourth of low-income, cost-burdened renters are elderly.** Twenty (20) percent of cost-burdened households are headed by someone age 55-74, and 9 percent are age 75-plus.

- **Supply is very short for extremely low-income households.** Florida has only 31 affordable and available rental units for every 100 households with incomes of 0-30% AMI, which is a deficit of more than 315,000 units.

- **Homelessness continues to be a serious problem.** Statewide, an estimated 31,148 homeless families with children that mostly double-up with friends or family, or are living in hotels and motels.

The complete 2013 Rental Market Study reports are located at www.shimberg.ufl.edu/publications3.html

---

**REQUESTS FOR APPLICATIONS**

Florida Housing's Multifamily Programs will issue "Requests for Applications" (RFAs) prior to the end of the year for the following funding sources:

1. $35 million (approximate) of 2014 competitive low-income housing tax credits in four RFAs - Small and Medium Counties, Large Counties in Southeast Florida, Large Counties not in Southeast Florida, and Elderly Preservation;

2. $60 million in SAIL program funds to provide financing for development and preservation of rental housing, where $25 million will go to elderly housing, $25 million will fund housing for extremely low-income households, and $10 million will fund developments that set aside 10-15 percent of their units for persons with developmental disabilities;

3. $10 million in competitive grants for non-profit organizations to develop or rehabilitate single family rental housing or small multifamily properties to serve homeless persons, with a priority for extremely low-income households;

4. $10 million in competitive grants for non-profit organizations to develop housing to serve persons with developmental disabilities; and

5. $10 million in competitive loan funds to non-profit housing developers to construct affordable, sustainable, and permanent housing for special needs and extremely low-income households.

For additional information, visit www.floridahousing.org.

---

**PROPERTIES FOR SALE**

A single-mom with two children, earning an annual income of less than $26,250 can rent a beautiful three-bedroom apartment at this property, including a pool, for just $600 per month—a 50 percent savings when compared to other rents in the area. Two- and four-bedroom units are also available. The Paces Foundation offers community services to its residents, such as Kids Corner art projects and group homework time, community events, and health services.

Images of the underground resins, which were constructed to collect oily water from the parking lots and helped to secure the LEED Platinum award, in addition to more pictures of the celebration can be seen on The Paces Foundation Facebook page.


**ABOUT PACES FOUNDATION**

The Paces Foundation is a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides affordable housing and services for low-income citizens; the Foundation owns more than 2,300 affordable units throughout the southeast United States with more than 24 properties located in Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Additionally, the Foundation is and is Section 3 compliant.
Florida Housing was created to help our state’s citizens obtain safe, decent affordable housing that might otherwise be unavailable to them. While we work hard at achieving success with fulfilling our mission, on rare occasions, properties financed by the Corporation fall into foreclosure. Additionally, Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code allows owners of tax credit properties to request Florida Housing present a qualified contract for the acquisition of the low-income portion of the property by anyone who will continue to operate it as a qualified low-income building, provided that the owner did not previously waive this right.

Florida Housing currently has two vacant land parcels and three Housing Credit Qualified Contract developments for sale. The two parcels of land include:

- A 72-acre (approximate) site adjacent to the Wal-Mart Supercenter store in Quincy (Gadsden County), located one mile from Interstate 10 highway; and
- A 1.3-acre (approximately) lot in Fernandina Beach (Nassau County), 1.3 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, with close proximity to a shopping center containing movie theaters and a health care facility.

The Housing Credit Qualified Contract Developments include:

- WaterBridge, a 280-unit family property in Orlando (Orange County);
- Falcon Trace Apartments, a 252-unit family property in Orlando (Orange County); and
- Brandon Crossing, a 200-unit property in Brandon (Hillsborough County).

Information on these properties can be found on Florida Housing’s website under Preservation. Marcus and Millichap Real Estate Brokers (www.marcusmillichap.com) can also be contacted for additional information on these developments. Properties are added to our website as they are ready to be listed.

SINGLE FAMILY STAFF CONDUCTS TRAININGS STATEWIDE

Continuing to promote Florida Housing’s homeownership programs through lenders and Realtors®, Florida Housing’s Single Family program office held a Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) Program training with Ryland Homes® and RMC Mortgage in Tallahassee in March.

Single Family also taught the Realtor® continuing education (CE) class, “Affordable Housing Solutions: What Every Realtor® Should Know” in May at the Greater Tampa Association of Realtors® (GTAR), where there were more than 100 Realtors® in attendance.

SHIP PROGRAM FUNDING

The SHIP program is receiving an allocation of $40 million for the 2013-14 fiscal year. The funding must be expended under the guidelines specified in Senate Bill 1852, which was signed into law by Governor Scott on June 4. Amongst the new program requirements for use of this funding is that at least 20 percent of the funding must serve persons with special needs. Funding is allocated to all 67 counties and 52 eligible municipalities, and will be disbursed in July.

FORECLOSURE COUNSELING PROGRAM UPDATE

Florida Housing will implement the Foreclosure Counseling Program this month using $10 million in funds from the National Mortgage Settlement Fund. Approximately 50 counseling agencies have qualified to participate in this program, which will provide extended counseling services to more than 10,000 homeowners that are pursuing a loan modification or other resolution of their mortgage. Florida Housing has contracted with the Florida Housing Counseling Network to provide training and technical assistance to the counseling agencies participating in this new program.
Florida Housing successfully refunded two series of Single Family New Issuance Bond Program (NIBP) bonds in the amounts of $108,080,000 and $89,840,000, respectively. The NIBP bonds carried an interest rate of 4.05 percent plus a .01 percent NIBP fee. Both series were at least 2.5 times oversubscribed by investors, which allowed both deals to be priced at a 2.80 percent interest rate. The financing that was marketed to refund both deals was a taxable "modified pass-through" structure with a single term. Based on current prepayment speeds, Florida Housing will achieve a savings of more than $14 million for these refundings.

Transit Oriented Development in Florida

In recent years, the term "Transit Oriented Development" has become a part of vocabulary for housing finance agencies (HFAs), affordable housing advocates and developers of affordable housing. However, what exactly does the term mean and why is it important to the housing industry, as a whole?

Transit Oriented Development, or TOD, refers to a small walkable area of dense, mixed-use development surrounding a transit station; the TOD is specifically designed to facilitate transit use. Typically, TODs are not larger than a half mile in radius, which is a distance most people are willing to walk in order to access a mode of transit to travel to their destination. "Walkable" means the area has sidewalks, crosswalks, and other features that make walking safe and convenient.

There are several transit modes that are supportive of TODs; however, the key attribute of a development being "transit oriented" is that there is a fixed transit route. This means railways, electric cables, or a designated transit lane in the roadway is present at the site. Some areas have developed TODs near major bus hubs or "park and ride" locations-the point being, there is some type of permanent infrastructure to support other types of development in the station area. Here in Florida, we see TODs at many rail stations, including MetroRail, TriRail, and the forthcoming SunRail commuter line in Central Florida. Local governments have designated areas around some of these stations as a TOD, and have developed requirements for density, streetscape design, parking, and other planning elements.

Housing is a key element in most TODs; it contributes to the mix of uses that make an area functional for all 24 hours of a day. Housing promotes safety in the area, as there are potentially always "eyes on the street" observing the comings and goings of the people in the area. The development of affordable housing in TODs is vital. Many low-income households rely on public transportation for work and daily errands. After housing, transportation is a household's biggest expense, so improving access to transportation eases that burden for families who already have low incomes. Good TODs not only have amenities within walking distance, but also provide access to more than one transit mode or route, thereby connecting people with their communities.

As several areas of the state are developing and expanding premium transit services (i.e., rail and bus rapid transit), the TOD discussion has gained a lot of momentum during the last few years. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, in collaboration with the Florida Department of Transportation and several stakeholders around the state, has developed the Florida TOD Guidebook (available online at www.ftod.com). The Guidebook is intended to be a "how-to" reference for local governments to plan and implement TODs. These areas have the potential to make a very positive impact in their communities, both in terms of sustainability and quality of life.

Note: The discussion on TODs will be featured in the next edition of What's Developing, titled "Florida Housing Funds TOD Developments."

NCSHA Connection

The National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization created by the nation's state HFAs more than 30 years ago to coordinate and leverage federal advocacy efforts for affordable housing issues. What began as a small group of executive directors meeting annually now has grown into a powerful national association and advocate in Washington, D.C., for HFAs and affordable housing. For more information, please visit the organization's website at www.ncsha.org.
FLORIDA HOUSING PARTICIPATES IN RELAY FOR LIFE
In April, staff at Florida Housing established a team to participate in the American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life" event that was held at the Leon County Fairgrounds in Tallahassee, FL. The event is designed to be a fundraiser for the Society and to celebrate survivors, their caregivers and to remember those lost to this devastating disease. The team surpassed its goal of raising $2,500 by raising $3,616.82 due to the generosity and hard work of our employees, friends, colleagues, and families. Most families have been affected by cancer in some way. We were glad to help fight cancer and celebrate those who have overcome.