



# City of Fort Walton Beach

*"The Treasure of the Emerald Coast"*

107 Miracle Strip Parkway SW \* Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

(850) 833-9504 \* Fax (850) 833-9640

TDD (850) 833-9925



*Michael D. Beedie*  
City Manager  
[mbeedie@fwb.org](mailto:mbeedie@fwb.org)

March 4, 2020

Ms. Marisa Button  
Director of Multifamily Allocations  
Florida Housing Finance Corporation  
227 North Bronough Street, Suite 5000  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dear Ms. Button,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the upcoming RFAs for FY 2020-21.

This comment/request is applicable to the Local Government Area of Opportunity contribution amounts for Medium County Applications.

The City of Fort Walton Beach is requesting that the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) consider reducing the amount of money required for the contribution and scale the Local Government Area of Opportunity (LGAO) contributions to be more in line with respect to the size of the county and the amount of State and other funding that county may receive for housing initiatives such as the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) and HOME. Not all counties or cities are in HOME entitlement areas which lowers the ability for a jurisdiction to provide the LGAO.

FHFC has a goal to fund applications that qualify for the LGAO. The LGAO contribution must be in the form of cash loans and/or grants from counties or cities for any proposed Development applying in this RFA. Currently, LGAO contribution amounts are set at amounts that are more of a "one size fits all" for medium counties. This should not be the case as not all medium counties are equal based on population and resources. Smaller medium counties may not have the resources to fund the higher contribution amounts.

Previously FHFC grouped counties by size/population. As such, there was a Large Medium, Medium and Small Medium grouping. Perhaps this format would work for grouping the contribution amounts.

The City of Fort Walton Beach, located in Okaloosa County, is a relatively small city (April 1, 2019 population = 20,940) located in a smaller medium county (April 1, 2019 population = 201,514). However, regardless of the size, Fort Walton Beach has a limited amount of affordable housing units and a great need to find housing for the lower income workers that live in this area full-time. This area is a popular destination area for vacationing families, but the housing prices are in the higher

price range, resulting in the workforce for the area living out of the area.

The City has a close working relationship with the Fort Walton Beach Housing Authority (FWBHA) and is very supportive of the efforts to rebuild the FWBHA's old housing units and to increase the number of units on the site to allow for more families and workers to find safe and affordable housing in the immediate area of the jobs that are available.

The FWBHA has the experience in providing alternative workforce housing. In 2008, the FWBHA took advantage of the market downturn and through lower construction costs and affordable interest rates in conventional financing built a beautiful affordable housing development with 200 units called "Sound Side Apartments" which has rents at 80% and below with no subsidy or compliance. It is FWBHA's mission to provide safe affordable housing to the residents of Fort Walton Beach, and the City would like to be able to provide the support required to allow more opportunities for the FWBHA to achieve its goal.

We look forward to working with FHFC to come up with a solution for smaller cities and counties that wish to support developments in their jurisdictions to get the support and opportunities to compete in a smaller pool of applications that are supported through LGAO contribution.

Please feel free to contact me for further discussion at (850) 833-9612 or [mbeedie@fwb.org](mailto:mbeedie@fwb.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Beedie".

Michael D. Beedie, P.E.

City Manager

City of Fort Walton Beach

Note: FY 2019-20 SHIP: Okaloosa County = \$341,573; City of FWB = \$40,115  
Projected FY 2020-21 SHIP: Okaloosa County = \$2,126,371; City of FWB = \$249,728  
HOME \$0