

## **How Link Works**

### **THE LINK STRATEGY – OVERVIEW**

Florida Housing requires developers to provide a specified percentage of a Development's ELI units for special needs households receiving community based supportive services who are referred by a designated supportive services agency in the community where the Development is located. The following is an overview of the Link Strategy Requirements.

#### **Link Set-Aside Requirements**

For the affordability period as specified in the regulatory agreement, the Development shall set aside a percentage of the ELI units as Link units for the intended population (Link Set-Aside Requirement) as described in the Request for Applications (RFA). At least one member of each Link household shall be referred by a Special Needs Household Referral Agency (Referral Agency) with which the owner executes a Link Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved by the Corporation. The owner shall execute an MOU with at least one designated Referral Agency serving the county and intended population where the Development will be located and rent units to households referred by the Referral Agency with which the MOU is executed.

#### **Link Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

The Corporation has established and maintains a list of supportive service agencies or organizations serving each county, each of which is designated as a Referral Agency. These agencies are statewide, regional or local organizations that administer community-based supportive services to the populations served by Link. The MOU is a formal agreement between the owner and a Referral Agency that specifies the intent of the Link Strategy and describes the roles and responsibilities of each party to the MOU.

### **Unit Availability**

Units shall be held open for intended households referred by the Referral Agency for a period of 30 calendar days starting from the date the vacated unit is suitable for occupancy and ready to lease. The owner shall notify the Referral Agency that a unit is available on or before the date that the vacated unit becomes suitable for occupancy and ready to lease, but no more than 30 calendar days before the unit is anticipated to be ready to lease.

During leasing activity, the owner shall make all units available for the intended Link households referred by the Referral Agency, until the Development's Link Set-Aside Requirement has been met. If the Development has not met its Link Set-Aside Requirement by the passing of 30 days after the last unit is available for occupancy, the owner may lease the units to any eligible household.

### **Responsibilities of the Referral Agency**

Referral Agencies ensure that Special Needs Households qualifying for the ELI units in the Development are:

- receiving community based supportive services at the time of the referral;
- prepared to live in an independent living environment; and
- able to pay the determined rent and other costs for the available ELI unit.

Some of the Special Needs Households may require regular and long-term community based supportive services during their tenancy, while others may need only temporary or short-term support to address a situational crisis or to receive assistance to regain independence and stability.

Referral Agencies also:

- Develop and maintain a list of eligible Special Needs Households interested in applying for reserved Link units as they become available.
- Designate a point of contact to receive notices from the Owner/Management when there is a reserved unit available;
- Work with the Development during the application and leasing period for all Special Needs Household residents;

### **Compliance Monitoring**

Owners are required to keep documentation on file for compliance monitoring purposes.

Monitors will ask to inspect email communication with the Referral Agency demonstrating timely notification regarding the availability of units for the intended Link household, outcome of each referral, and, when an available unit was not rented to a Link household, the number of days the available unit was held open for intended Link household.

The monthly Program Report submitted to Florida Housing by the Development shall reflect the number of Link households residing in an ELI unit.

**Memorandum of Understanding forms for Property Owners:** The correct form for the specific RFA under which the property was financed must be used. The correct MOU forms are on the specific RFA Page, under “Forms Related to RFA.” Please follow all instructions for review and approval of MOUs as stated in the Exhibit to the RFA.