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Jean Salmonsens

Assistant Director of Multifamily Allocations  
Florida Housing Finance Corporation  
227 North Bronaugh Street; Suite 5000  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: Financing for Persons with Disabling Condition or Persons with Developmental Disabilities RFA 2021-106

Follow-up questions to Workshop held on January 26, 2021

Dear Ms. Salmonsens:

Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure that sustainable housing options are developed for our most vulnerable citizens.

The Board of Directors of Casa Familia, Inc. and its development team offer the following questions and comments for your consideration:

### **Re: Total Development Cost Per Unit Multipliers**

Recommendation:

Adjust the multiplier for the Demographic Commitment for Developments serving Persons with Developmental Disabilities from 90% to 67%. This change in multiplier will support the inclusion of design features and amenities that individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities require to live successfully in supportive housing communities of this kind.

Casa Familia's initial development was funded in 2019, has gone through design development and construction bidding and is currently wrapping up permitting. After going through this process, we have determined what it costs to create a development tailored to the needs of the tenants and the requirements of the RFA.

Our design was driven by several expert stakeholders:

- Charettes with local and national experts including:
  - Dr Michael Alessandri, Director of the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.
  - Dr. Jeffrey Brosco, professor of clinical pediatrics at the University of Miami and associate director of the school's Mailman Center for Child Development.



- George Braddock, Licensed Architect and General Contractor who pioneered the implementation of person-centered planning principles to homes for people with disabilities.
- Founders and Developers of the five Florida DD communities who confirmed the problems they could have avoided if these features and accommodations had been incorporated into their properties.
- Specialty consultants in the following fields:
  - Sound Engineering
  - Occupational/Sensory Processing
  - Disability Design
  - Life Safety
  - Disability Technology

The feedback of these experts led to the following design requirements that exceed a “standard” affordable housing unit:

- Increased square footage in both units and common areas to provide necessary opportunities for social interactions, universal visitability, and reasonable in-unit space for the resident (who may be home a large percentage of the time and in many cases will require an attendant to provide them services).
- Sound attenuation necessary to house individuals who suffer from sensory processing disorders.
- Smart Technology to address the unique life safety needs of this population, promote self-reliance/independence, and reduce individual dependence on hired support staff for assistance.
- Emergency generators to ensure elevators are operational, to support the needs of residents with physical challenges, during power outages and natural disasters.
- Provision of a hurricane hardened community center, with generator capacity, where individuals who are unable to evacuate can shelter.

#### **Effects of not taking the proposed actions:**

The current multipliers would force Developers serving the Developmental Disabilities Community to reduce the size of units and common areas and eliminate vital features that provide the accommodations/accessibility this population requires, in order to meet the current TDC Caps. Doing so will create significant barriers to residency for many with intellectual and developmental disabilities who Florida Housing is seeking to assist through this RFA.

Thank you,

Deborah Lawrence  
Senior Housing Director