



Entry Form 2017 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Thursday, June 15, 2017, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation
“Born Again: Florida Housing’s Redeveloped & Redesigned Website”
Communications, Creative Media

“Born Again: Florida Housing’s Redeveloped & Redesigned Website”

On Tuesday, May 23, 2017, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) launched our redeveloped and redesigned public website. This event was the culmination of a year of work that involved every department at the Corporation. However, the Communications and Information Technology Services (ITS) departments had main responsibility for the successful outcome of this massive project.

The Diagnosis

The website, which by all accounts was not representative of the good work Florida Housing does as the state’s housing finance agency (HFA), was an eye-sore, suffered from “logo creep” and was very difficult to navigate. Frankly, it was lost; it suffered from one of the worse possible “human” conditions—a lack of purpose and its reason for being alive! This condition resulted in the website being unfocused, uncoordinated and uninspired. Florida Housing’s website needed to be redeveloped and redesigned; it needed to be “born again!”

Staff at the Corporation had known for some time that the website needed significant attention to establish a better presence on the World Wide Web that is indicative of our mission and vision. We had been so busy with doing the work of providing affordable housing opportunities for citizens in our state, that we were not able to properly engage in a process to mold and shape www.FloridaHousing.org into a true “gateway” to the Corporation.

The Treatment Plan

In 2014, Florida Housing’s Board of Directors adopted a Strategic Plan with several priorities, including **Priority IV: Ensure that information about Florida Housing’s programs and the role that affordable housing plays in our state’s economy is accessible and understandable to all.** A re-birth of the website was a central goal to satisfy this objective. As such, a Website Redevelopment Project (WRP) team was established; it was mostly comprised of staff members from the Communications and ITS departments. The vision of the WRP was as follows:

Florida Housing’s new website will integrate all areas of the Corporation to reflect our mission of providing ranges of affordable housing opportunities for residents that help to make Florida communities great places in which to live, work and do business. The website will feature representations of the populations we serve, and be organized in an intuitive way, easy to navigate and will incorporate social media to help forward our brand.

The WRP proceeded in three phases: (1) Research and Planning; (2) Design and Re-Branding; and (3) Building and Deployment.

Phase (1) involved a comprehensive analysis of Florida Housing’s old website through the lens of other HFAs’ websites, and through engaging both internal and external stakeholders. The Corporation worked with an outside vendor to provide an in-depth review of the old website to

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help determine the best way to redevelop and organize a new website. Goals defined and achieved during this phase included:

- 1) Assessing the old website on its own, and in comparison with other state HFAs;
- 2) Examining the Corporation’s customer base to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and potential threats (SWOT analysis) with respect to how the website is currently structured and used by them; and
- 3) Developing a report to be presented to designated Corporation staff that details the research conducted and provides feedback on how the Corporation can better present its brand to customers and stakeholders.

Information gathered from Phase (1) was validated as the WRP continued its work. The most important result of Phase (1) was a draft navigational structure for the new website, which served as a blueprint for the redevelopment/redesign.

Each department in Florida Housing selected a WRP Liaison to a.) identify his/her department’s information on the old website; b.) confer with department staff regarding its accuracy and relevance; and c.), determine its department’s information to be migrated to the new website. The next two phases [(2) and (3)] were combined and a request for proposals (RFP) was issued for a vendor to recommend a content management system (CMS, which we purchased through a separate RFP) on which the new site would live, and to design and build the new site.

The RE-BIRTH!

Florida Housing’s new website was officially born again on May 23, delivering an enhanced user experience to better provide information about the Corporation and its many programs to the public.

The site—www.FloridaHousing.org—features representations of the populations served by rental housing development and homeownership programs the Corporation administers. It is organized in a more intuitive way that is much easier to navigate than its predecessor. For example, a prospective first-time homebuyer can visit the homepage and scroll down to the first colored block that says “Homebuyers and Renters.” The menu underneath says “Homeownership Programs Wizard,” which when clicked, immediately connects the user to the website application that helps him/her learn about the homebuyer programs, including available low-interest, fixed-rate mortgages, down payment/closing cost assistance, and lenders and Realtors® approved to work with Florida Housing’s programs.

The site is also compliant with federal laws and guidelines, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Users who are visually impaired can convert the site to high-contrast viewing, and the text can be sized up or down, per the needs of the user.

Using the embedded Google® translation tool, the website can be translated into more than 30 languages at the click of a button. This is a very important feature for the diverse population of

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Florida, which includes citizens whose primary language is one other than English, such as Spanish, Haitian-Creole, or any number of Asian languages. Also, there is a search function incorporated into the new website for users who cannot immediately find the information they need.

The After-Glow

Feedback from stakeholders has been very positive; many have said the sleek and sophisticated design helps to engage the user. Others have commented that the site is organized in a much better way, making it easier to find information and search for programs.

The website has gone from a static collection of important documents and narratives, to a dynamic presentation of the important role Florida Housing plays in the provision of affordable housing in the state. The site is fluid and lively, with opportunities for further enhancements, such as incorporating social media as the Corporation implements a strategy to join the social media environment. This new website knows its purpose and its reason for being alive!

While the website looks like it costs a million or more dollars, nothing could be further from the truth. For all three phases of the site, including the CMS platform, approximately \$150,000 was spent, and a recurring cost for supporting the CMS will be factored into yearly budget allocations. However, having a strong, aesthetically pleasing and functional website is, in a word, PRICELESS and well worth the money expended.

Today’s world is one where a strong presence on the Internet is so very important. Florida Housing’s new website is a significant part of enhanced efforts to better communicate and interface with our stakeholder audiences. The improvements we have made will help Florida Housing keep pace with an ever-changing affordable housing market, while speaking to the needs of renters, prospective homebuyers and developers of affordable housing.



we make housing affordable™

OLD WEBSITE ARCHIVE: NO LONGER LIVE OR BEING UPDATED

Home | AHSC | Contact Us | Website Terms & Conditions | On-Line Survey | Site Map | WebBoard

- ▣ ABOUT US
- ▣ BUSINESS & LEGAL
- ▣ CALENDARS
- ▣ DEVELOPERS
- ▣ DISASTER RELIEF
- ▣ EMPLOYMENT
- ▣ FOR INVESTORS
- ▣ FORECLOSURE PREVENTION
- ▣ HOMEBUYERS & RENTERS
- ▣ HOUSING PARTNERS
- ▣ HOUSING RESOURCES
- ▣ MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS
- ▣ NEWSROOM & LIBRARY
- ▣ PRESERVATION
- ▣ PROPERTY OWNERS & MANAGERS
- ▣ QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
- ▣ REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
- ▣ SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING
- ▣ UNIVERSAL CYCLE HISTORY
- ▣ GREEN BUILDING



Municipal Advisor Notice

CURRENT EVENTS

- ▶ Board Meeting May 5 in Tallahassee, FL
- ▶ Florida Housing Finance Corporation Announces New Executive Director
- ▶ Catalyst Workshop Schedule
- ▶ Florida HHF-DPA Program available in select counties

Homepage for the old Florida Housing website.

- 1.) Logo creep--the Corporation's main programs each had a logo on the homepage.
- 2.) Static--nothing dynamic on the homepage; stale; no images representing the populations we serve.
- 3.) Not easily navigated--side menu titles are not readily recognizable by new visitors to the site.



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[Home](#) | [AHSC](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Website Terms & Conditions](#) | [On-Line Survey](#) | [Site Map](#) | [WebBoard](#)

[HOME](#) > [DEVELOPERS](#)

- [+ ABOUT US](#)
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 - [QUESTIONS & ANSWERS](#)
 - [REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS](#)
 - [SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING](#)
 - [UNIVERSAL CYCLE HISTORY](#)
 - [GREEN BUILDING](#)

Developers

[Apply for Funding](#)

More information coming soon.

[Elderly Housing Community Loan](#)

Offers up to \$750,000 in loans to make substantial improvements to existing affordable rental housing for the elderly.

[HOME Investment Partnerships](#)

Makes low or no interest, non-amortizing loans to developers who acquire, rehabilitate or construct housing for low income families.

[Low Income Housing Tax Credits \("Housing Credits"\)](#)

Provides nonprofit and for-profit developers with a dollar-for-dollar reduction in federal tax liability in exchange for the development of affordable rental housing.

[Multifamily Energy Retrofit Program](#)

Provides loans to older Florida Housing properties for energy retrofits to save on energy and operating costs.

[Multifamily Mortgage Revenue Bonds](#)

Uses both taxable and tax-exempt bonds to provide below market rate construction loans to nonprofit and for-profit developers of affordable housing.

[Predevelopment Loan Program](#)

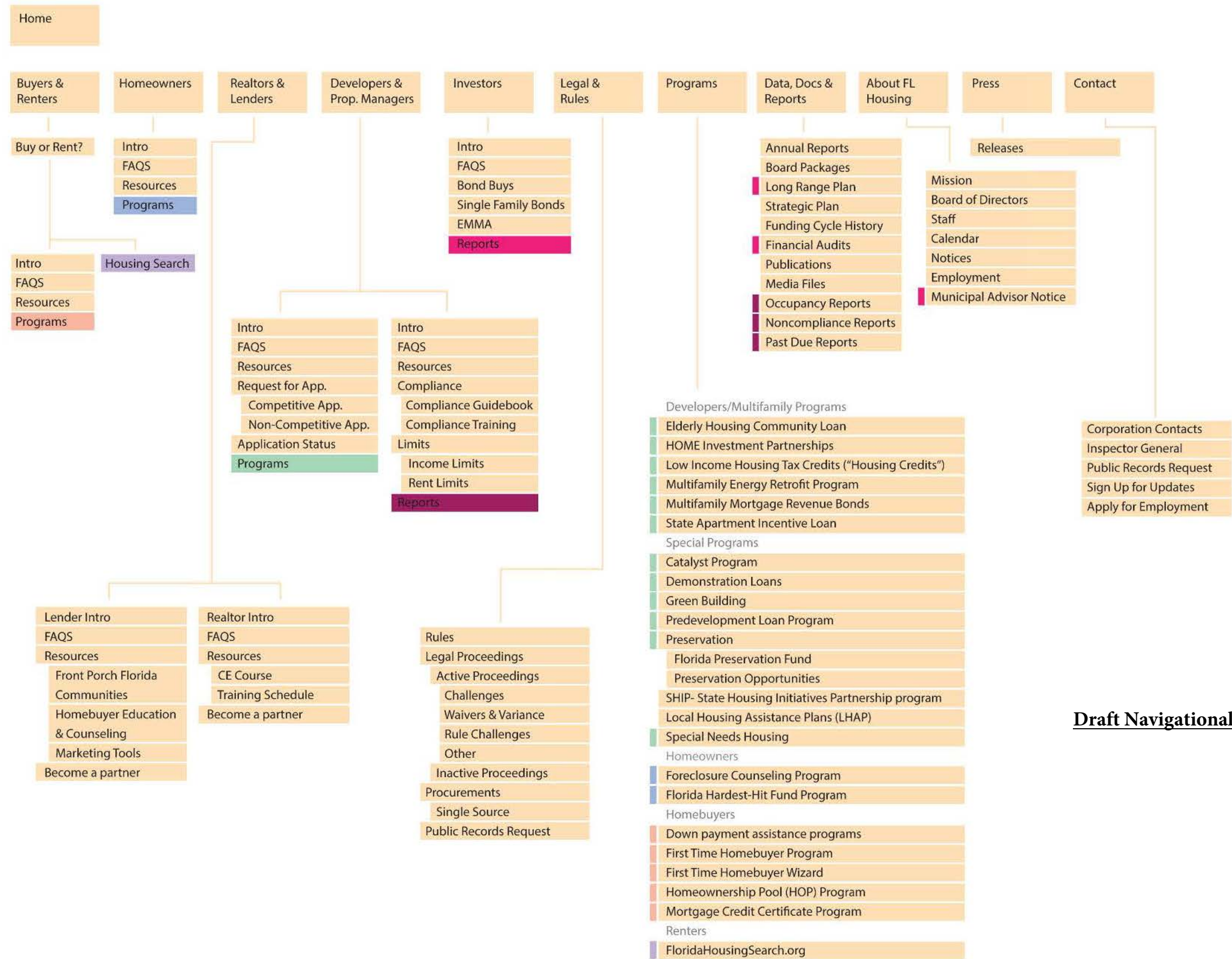
Assists affordable housing developers with up to \$750,000 in financing for predevelopment activities associated with the construction of affordable housing, such as rezoning, title searches, impact fees and other requirements.

[State Apartment Incentive Loan](#)

Provides developers with the gap financing needed to obtain full financing of affordable rental housing.

Example of an Internal webpage for the old Florida Housing website.

- 1.) Too many colors and fonts--busy while being sparse at the same time.
- 2.) Not easily navigated--side menu titles are not readily recognizable by new visitors to the site.



Navigation Chart

Draft Navigational Structure from Phase I

Select Language Powered by Google Translate

search this site

ABOUT FLORIDA HOUSING LEGAL PROGRAMS DATA, DOCS & REPORTS PRESS CONTACT US

FLORIDA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION
We make housing affordable™

Homebuyers & Renters

- > Homeownership Programs Wizard
- > Affordable Rental Housing Locator
- > Special Needs Rental Housing
- > SHIP-Homeownership & Rental Programs



Assistance for Homeowners

- > Florida Hardest-Hit Fund Programs
- > Foreclosure Counseling Program
- > SHIP-Disaster Relief Programs



Lenders & Realtors™

- > Lenders & Loan Officers
- > Realtors™



Developers

- > Rental Development Programs/Homeownership Development Programs
- > Requests for Applications (RFAs)
- > Current Rules/Rule Development Process
- > Special Programs
- > Special Needs Housing
- > Grants for Persons with Developmental Disabilities



Property Owners & Managers

- > Compliance Information
- > Rental Housing Income Limits
- > Rental Housing Rent Limits
- > Rental Property Reports



Sign up for Florida Housing's E-News

Click SUBSCRIBE to sign up for notifications from Florida Housing about programs, funding and other information

SUBSCRIBE

Want to Join our Team?

[CLICK HERE](#) to view current employment opportunities.

What's Developing

Current News from Florida Housing

- Board Meeting June 16 in Orlando
- Florida Housing launches its Re-Engineered Website
- Catalyst Workshop Schedule
- Florida HHF-DPA Program available in select counties

Quick Links

- About Florida Housing
- Data, Docs & Reports
- Multifamily Programs
- Disaster Relief
- Employment
- Affordable Housing Study Commission
- Foreclosure Assistance
- Green Building
- Mortgage Credit Certificate
- Legal
- Press
- Programs
- Property Owners & Managers
- Requests for Applications
- Special Needs Housing
- Report Fraud Waste or Abuse

Contact Us

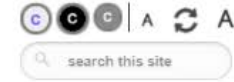
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Suncom (850) 278-4197
F (850) 488-9809

Homepage for the "Born Again" Florida Housing website.

- 1.) No logos--branding is for Florida Housing as a Corporation and HFA, not each and every program we administer.
- 2.) Dynamic--slide show of images representing populations we serve; actual photo of a multifamily development funded by Florida Housing.
- 3.) Very easy to navigate--top menu categorized according to the major topics searched by users.



Select Language
Powered by Google Translate



Home / Programs / Multifamily Programs

Multifamily Programs

Elderly Housing Community Loan

Offers up to \$750,000 in loans to make substantial improvements to existing affordable rental housing for the elderly.

Grants for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

HOME Investment Partnerships

Makes low or no interest, non-amortizing loans to developers who acquire, rehabilitate or construct housing for low income families.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits ("Housing Credits")

Provides nonprofit and for-profit developers with a dollar-for-dollar reduction in federal tax liability in exchange for the development of affordable rental housing.

Multifamily Energy Retrofit Program

Provides loans to older Florida Housing properties for energy retrofits to save on energy and operating costs.

Multifamily Mortgage Revenue Bonds

Uses both taxable and tax-exempt bonds to provide below market rate construction loans to nonprofit and for-profit developers of affordable housing.

National Housing Trust Fund

Predevelopment Loan Program

Assists affordable housing developers with up to \$750,000 in financing for predevelopment activities associated with the construction of affordable housing, such as rezoning, title searches, impact fees and other requirements.

State Apartment Incentive Loan

Provides developers with the gap financing needed to obtain full financing of affordable rental housing.



Quick Links

About Florida Housing
Data, Docs & Reports
Multifamily Programs
Disaster Relief
Employment
Affordable Housing Study
Commission

Foreclosure Assistance
Green Building
Mortgage Credit Certificate
Legal
Press

Programs
Property Owners & Managers
Requests for Applications
Special Needs Housing
Report Fraud Waste or Abuse

Contact Us

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New Internal Page for the Website

1.) Consistent Color--the page has the same color throughout.

2.) Easily Navigated--topics are easy to see and navigate.