



# Lakeland Housing Authority Provides Affordable Housing for Seniors

**L**akeland Housing Authority (LHA) created various instrumentalities and partnered with its affiliate, Lakeland Polk Housing Corporation, a 501c3 community housing development organization (CHDO), to build an affordable elderly project in a low-income West Bartow Front Porch neighborhood and the Bartow Community Redevelopment Area. By winning Low Income Housing Credits and project basing 99 housing choice vouchers, LHA built 100-units (a mix of 50% -1 and 50% -2 bedroom units) of senior housing. LHA obtained funding for the development from the Bartow CRA, the City of Bartow, and Polk County.

***“This project was a perfect example of a Lakeland Housing Authority/Royal American Management Team Effort; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts,”*** said Dr. Stephen P. Boyer, team chief at LHA Manor at West Bartow.

Both Polk County and the City of Bartow Market Area experienced a strong pace of growth over the past several years and was expected to expand further over the calendar years 2007 - 2015 forecast period. In order to accommodate the forecasted increase in households over the forecast period, it was estimated that the number of housing units in Polk County needed to increase by 6,323 units per year from 2007 to 2010 and 5,565 per year from 2010 to 2015. In the Bartow Market Area, housing needed to increase by 1,007 units per year from 2007 to 2010 and 882 annually from 2010 to 2015.



*Manor at West Bartow, provides 100 units for seniors using tax credits and housing choice vouchers.*

To meet this need, LHA was dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Polk County by providing and effectively managing affordable housing programs, which are diverse, well maintained and aesthetically pleasing. Ninety-nine of the 100 apartments were built to assist very low income households with area median incomes (AMI) at less than 50% of AMI. This was accomplished by project basing housing choice vouchers for 99 of the apartments.

With a cooperation agreement in place with Bartow Housing Authority, LHA established objectives to market this development to every public housing authority in Polk County, every Section 8 housing choice voucher program, and every social service organization that serves elderly households in the lower income and very low income levels. For example, senior organizations such as Volunteers In Service To the Elderly (VISTE), Hands of Mercy, and Polk County Adult Day Care to name a few. LHA established a very aggressive development schedule to meet the need for senior housing.

"Building and managing affordable housing is an extraordinarily complex undertaking," said LHA's Executive Director Herbert Hernandez. "To assemble the right team is key to success. We are proud of all our partners: Lakeland Housing Authority, Lakeland-Polk Housing Corporation, Bessolo Architects, Creative Construction, Royal American Management, and of course all the residents, without whom there would not be a purpose in working so hard!"

The Lakeland Housing Authority will be featured as one of the senior housing case studies at the Florida Housing Coalition's 23rd annual affordable housing conference. [HNN](#)