



Lake City Cabins
1049 NW Winborn Way
Lake City, Florida,
Columbia County



State Housing Trust Fund is Essential for Housing Veterans



By Lydia Beltrán

For far too long, veteran homelessness has been a silent epidemic in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, approximately 23 percent of America’s homeless population is veterans. The VA estimates that each night nearly 131,000 veterans are homeless and the number of veterans experiencing homelessness nearly doubles over the course of a year.

Providing affordable housing is essential to combating veteran homelessness.

Several national and state organizations are dedicated to address veteran homelessness and provide services tailored specifically toward veterans. One such organization is Volunteers of America of Florida.

Volunteers of America of Florida (VOAF) is a national, nonprofit, faith-based organization dedicated to helping frail elderly, homeless individuals and families, people with disabilities, and those recovering from addictions. VOAF strives to provide services that will assist persons in stabilizing their lives. According to recent studies done by the Stand Down,

a national coalition for homeless veterans (www.standdown.org/homeless.html), Florida ranks third in the nation in the number of homeless people and also has one of the highest numbers of homeless veterans.

Since 1920, VOAF has provided services in approximately 15 locations throughout the state concentrating on veterans, veteran homeless and frail elderly. Lake City and Pensacola are two VOAF locations that provide much needed housing and services for homeless veterans.

State housing trust fund dollars provided an essential funding source for VOAF’s housing projects. SAIL dollars provided a critical piece of funding for the success of VOAF’s veteran housing.

“The state and local housing trust fund money is critical for leveraging the funds needed to house Veterans,” said Ed Quill, chief administrative officer for VOAF. “We owe it to our Veterans to see to it that they do not live on the streets.”

The following projects amplify the importance of state trust fund dollars and significant role the funds play in the combating veteran homelessness. Without the SAIL

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funding made available by the Sadowski state housing trust funds, VOAF's housing projects would not have come to fruition.

Lake City:

Phase I of a 3 phase affordable housing plan

- 32 studio units within 8 single story buildings with 4 efficiency units in each
- Community Room/office building/computer lab
- 80% of the units are specifically for homeless or disabled veterans
- 30% of the units set aside for households earning 40% or less of the AMI
- 70% of the units set aside for households earning 60% or less of the AMI
- Funding Sources: SAIL, and Department of Veterans Grant & Per Diem
- Rents range from \$318-\$477
- Grand opening was in October 2008

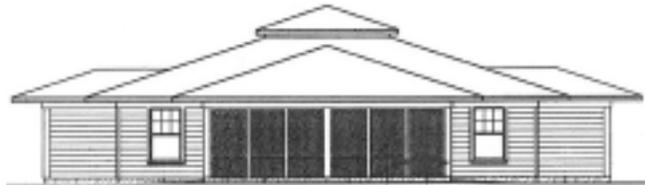
The additional project phases will be located on the remaining 10 acres owned by VOA: Phase 2 will be permanent housing that includes an HUD 811 application and Phase 3 is also being planned as permanent housing.

Pensacola:

- 31 units of transitional housing and Training/ Education Employment Center
- 8 residential buildings with 4 efficiency units in each
- Community room/office building/computer lab
- Construction start up scheduled for mid-year 2010
- Funding Sources: Department of Veteran's Affairs Grant & Per Diem, SAIL Special Needs Cycle through FHFC in underwriting process

Future Pensacola Project:

13 units of permanent housing which includes approved HUD 811 funding and match through Volunteers of America of Florida.



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