

FROM THE EDITOR >



BY JAIMIE ROSS  
PRESIDENT

The members of the Florida Housing Coalition and all our partner organizations in the Sadowski Coalition have much to celebrate from the 2014 legislative session.

This was a critical year for testing the mettle of the state and local housing trust funds as the legislature faced no budget deficit that might cause a sweep needed to pass a balanced budget.

And we did it—just enough people met with their legislators locally so that when those of us in Tallahassee again made the case for using the housing trust funds for housing, we were heard. The power of relationships at the local level- those face to face meetings in the district offices with legislators or legislative aides was, I believe, the key ingredient to this year’s legislative success.



SHIP was funded at \$100 million and SAIL was funded at \$67.7 million. And, in recognition of the dire need to reduce homelessness in Florida, \$4 million was appropriated from the local government trust fund specifically for that purpose. We had a heavy lift this session. While the Senate came out early in favor of using all the housing trust funds for housing, the House followed the Governor’s lead in sweeping 90% of the SHIP funds- virtually gutting the entire local government trust fund. And while we were not able to bring the House up to the Senate level; the negotiations between the two chambers resulted in the Senate agreeing to sweep \$58 million of housing trust fund monies, we came along way.

Our victory was not won on the notion of “keeping the trust in the trust funds”; it was

won on proving up the need for affordable housing and the excellence of Florida’s housing programs for meeting that need.

Both SHIP at the local level, and SAIL at the state level, have a proven track record of success in assisting Floridians with critical housing needs, including housing the working poor, low income seniors, people with disabilities, children, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness.

SHIP is a flexible program that operates at the retail level and provides funding to meet the specific needs of community residents, from the homeless to the moderate income workforce. SHIP is dynamic enough to change strategies during changing economic times. SAIL funds can be used to create, rehabilitate, and preserve affordable apartments which might otherwise be lost; apartments that house Florida’s most vulnerable populations, such as the frail elderly and persons

with disabilities who would end up living in institutional settings without the preservation of their apartments.

The Home Matters Report for Florida brought home this message and between the data and the success stories we are now back on track with our state and local housing trust funds. At this year’s statewide annual conference, we will showcase the Home Matters Report for Florida and your success stories from around the state as we highlight Healthy Outcomes from Affordable Housing. If you’ve never been to the Florida Housing Coalition’s statewide annual conference, you’re in for a treat; and for those of you who are coming back, I look forward to seeing you again in September. [HNN](#)

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