

FROM THE EDITOR >



BY JAIMIE ROSS
PRESIDENT

HEALTHY OUTCOMES FROM AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The fervor to lift up Floridians who suffer the most unfair of life’s circumstances, such as homelessness, and the enthusiasm for moving a low wealth family from rental into homeownership, is the palpable stuff of the Florida Housing Coalition’s statewide annual conference. More than a forum for panels of experts; the statewide conference is a catalyst for improving the design and implementation of existing programs and for forging partnerships to take on new challenges. It is a time to talk about why home matters and what we, as housing advocates, practitioners, and policy makers, can and should do to ensure that all Floridians enjoy the healthy outcomes that accrue from affordable housing.

In this edition of the Housing News Network Journal we re-cap the conference and provide articles from a variety of the experts who joined us to expound on topics covered at our statewide convening, including our conference Keynote, Michelle Norris. You can also find the PowerPoints that were used in each session on our conference website: www.flhousingconference.org.

Post-conference surveys from our 27th Statewide Affordable Housing Conference, “Healthy Outcomes from Affordable Housing”, let us know that the showcase of success stories was roundly praised, so you can look forward to that again in 2015. And of course, we owe so much gratitude to the SHIP Administrators whose programs we highlighted and to the private sector developers and partners who create these successes for us to highlight. The Florida Housing Coalition is committed to supporting your work through our training and technical assistance and our advocacy for full appropriation of the state and local housing trust funds. Together we will continue to showcase success stories every year.

When this edition goes on-line, it will be post elections and pre-

session. This is the perfect time for all of us to meet with our legislators or their legislative aides in the district offices. Call your local representative and senator to ask for a meeting to introduce yourself/your work with affordable housing.

Legislators respond to persons who live in their districts. If they hear about an issue from the “folks at home”, they tend to talk to leadership about the issue. If they don’t hear from you, then all the lobbyists in the world can’t make them care about the issue. You don’t need to be an expert. Simply explain that the issue of using all of the monies in the housing trust fund for housing is important to you and to the community.

Offer some concrete examples of persons served or successful developments. Start and end your meeting with “the ask”—which means telling the legislator or aide that you are there to ask the legislator to support using all of the monies in the state and local housing trust funds for housing.

It is critical that we know how the meeting went—good or bad. If the legislator or aide had questions or concerns, we can help provide answers. After every meeting with a legislator, please call or email the results to me at 850.212.0587 or ross@flhousing.org

For more information and educational materials, go to www.sadowskicoalition.com. To find your legislator, go to www.onlinesunshine.com. And if you’d like to talk before the meeting, please give me a call.

The Florida Housing Coalition is one of the 26 statewide organizations that comprise the Sadowski Act Coalition. And as members of the Florida Housing Coalition, you are also part of that Coalition—a critical part. We are so grateful to our members and all our partners. On behalf of the Florida Housing Coalition’s board and staff, I thank all of you who participated in the 27th statewide annual conference, including our financial Partners for Better Housing, without whom, we could not create this powerful event.

The appropriation of the estimated \$245.33 million in the state and local housing trust funds in fiscal year 2015-16 into Florida’s housing programs will create 24,820 jobs and more than \$2.5 billion in positive economic impact in Florida.