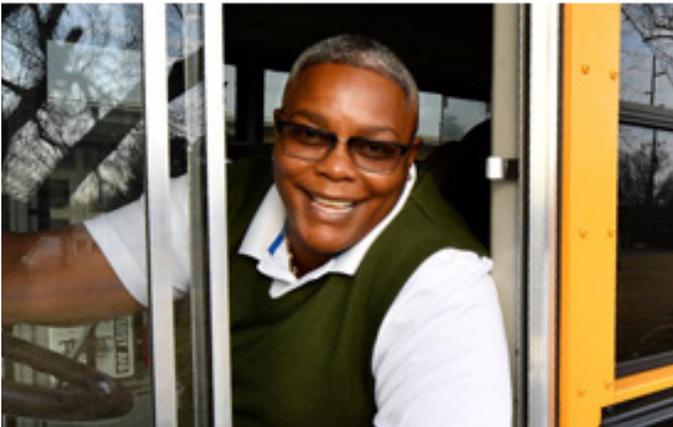
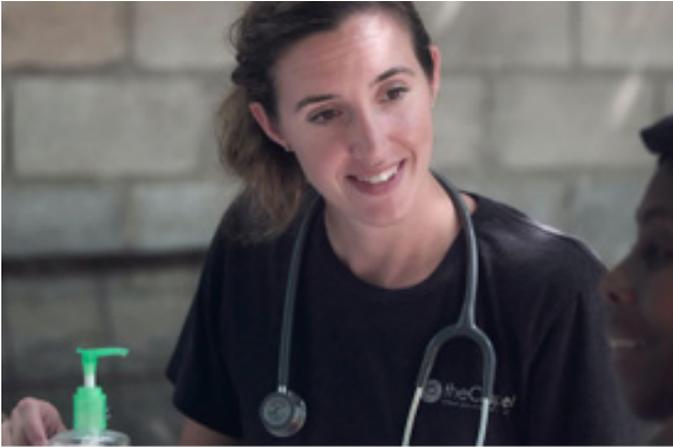


# Housing Cost Burden and the Business Community

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In 2021, we announced that the Florida Housing Coalition is partnering with the Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation as its 2030 Blueprint Goal Leader for affordable housing. The Chamber's goal is to reduce the housing cost burden rate to less than 10% of households by 2030. This is a tall order, as over 2 million low-income households are cost-burdened. These cost-burdened households earn up to 80% of their area median income and pay more than 30% of their income toward housing. This does not include those with higher incomes who are also cost-burdened. Indeed, the cost burden issue is not felt equally across the state. For example, cost-burden overall is highest in our largest metropolitan areas, exceeding 30% in the core counties of those metro areas, with Miami-Dade County coming in at the highest, with nearly 50% of all households experiencing housing cost

burden. Also, statewide, low-income renters are the most cost-burdened in every community.

Reducing the cost burden is imperative to our communities' and state's economic growth and prosperity. Housing stability is essential to a person's ability to pursue employment and education. Housing affordability is a critical quality-of-life issue included in employers' decisions to locate or expand in a particular location. Lower housing cost burden also means increased disposable income for households to support local businesses, particularly restaurants and retailers, who also employ a large portion of our state's workforce. Considering the benefits to businesses, business owners are vital stakeholders in addressing housing affordability.

So how can business owners get involved? First, it is important to know that although there are some commonalities statewide, housing issues are primarily local. Therefore, addressing the housing cost burden requires understanding local housing data. The Florida Housing Coalition's 2022 Home Matters Report is a great tool to begin understanding the causes of cost burden at the local level. We encourage business owners to look at their county's data to understand the rate of the housing cost burden, who is most likely to be cost-burdened, and how the wages of different jobs within their businesses compare to what is needed to afford median rents and home prices. Understanding this will allow business owners to draw direct connections to housing need and their employees.

Second, it is important that business owners also understand what affordable housing is. The Florida Housing Coalition's recently updated Affordable Housing in Florida can help business owners articulate to others in the community what affordable housing is and why it's essential. This resource explains that there are only two differences between affordable housing and market-rate housing: 1) the incomes of residents and 2) the financing used to produce it. This resource includes examples of affordable housing, particularly rental housing, which is needed the most, and can be consumed both as a guidebook and through a series of short videos summarizing each chapter in the book.

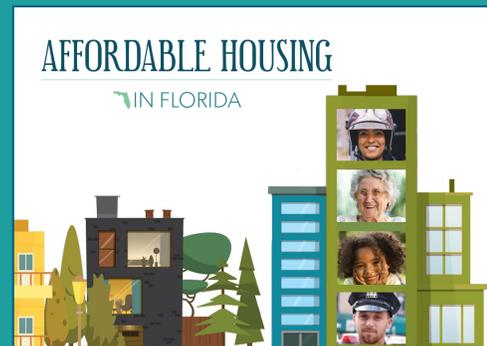
With an understanding of the data and how to properly define affordable housing, the business community can determine how best to support expanding access to affordable housing in its local context, thus reducing the cost burden. Keeping in mind our formula for affordability – planning, financing, and long-term assurances – the business community can find ways to get involved on all three terms. For example, in planning, many affordable housing developments get held up in public hearings where groups often show up to vocalize their opposition. Representatives of the business community can coordinate schedules to show up to these same hearings in equal

or greater numbers to support such developments, explaining how important these units are to their employees and the overall economic benefits of more affordable housing. Regarding financing, business owners who may be high-net-worth individuals themselves, can work with local philanthropic organizations to focus impact investing in housing. Finally, Chambers can use their resources to fill existing gaps, including forming new or supporting increased capacity of existing nonprofits.

For example, Nassau County Chamber of Commerce has taken the lead in establishing a new community land trust for the County, creating capacity for permanent affordability (long-term assurances).

Local Chambers and their members can play a vital role in expanding access to affordable housing, decreasing the cost burden in their communities. The Florida Housing Coalition is here to help. In addition to the resources described here, we have several others, including free guidebooks and other publications available for download. If you would

like to engage your local Chamber further in this work, please contact Ashon Nesbitt at [nesbitt@flhousing.org](mailto:nesbitt@flhousing.org).



The new edition of this definitive publication includes information on 2020's HB 1339, community land trusts, and details on other policies and programs that support the production and preservation of affordable housing. It is available for free download at <https://flhousing.org/publications/>



**Ashon Nesbitt** A respected community and nonprofit leader, Mr. Nesbitt is an expert in housing finance, development and program administration. As a strong advocate for permanent affordability, Nesbitt has championed the expansion and professionalization of Community Land Trusts throughout the state, overseeing the development of the Coalition's nationally recognized Community Land Trust Certification Program. Mr. Nesbitt has also lead many of Coalition's other initiatives and innovations, including the new Nonprofit Capacity Building Institute and Adaptive Reuse. Mr. Nesbitt has two Masters Degrees from the University of Florida; a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning and a Masters in Real Estate. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies from Florida A&M University.