
Funds for affordable housing appropriated at important time



As you read this, property values, home prices and apartment rental rates are on the rise in Florida and, in some areas, starting to skyrocket. While this is good news for Florida's economy as well as the housing market, which has been limping toward recovery since the housing-bubble burst back in 2007, it is a bad omen for those looking for affordable housing.

More than 920,000 very low-income households, including hardworking families, the elderly, veterans and disabled Floridians living on fixed incomes, are forced to spend more than 50 percent of their incomes on housing. Florida also has the nation's third highest homeless population, which includes 5,500 veterans, more than 7,000 families and even more than 10,800 homeless children.

Fortunately, this legislative session, the Florida Legislature took a positive step toward closing these disparities by appropriating \$175 million from Florida's housing trust funds toward affordable housing. This funding level constitutes approximately 68 percent of the \$256 million total that was available from the Sadowski Trust Fund.

On behalf of the 30 statewide organizations that comprise the diverse Sadowski Housing Coalition, I applaud the Florida Legislature for passing a state budget that appropriates these funds to help Florida's economy and Floridians in need of housing. I thank both Senate and House leadership for their support of affordable housing this legislative session.

The affordable housing crisis cannot be solved overnight, but we can help thousands of families move into affordable housing every year; and, we can assist Florida veterans, elderly, those with special needs and those living on fixed incomes to remain in their homes every year.

The Sadowski Coalition looks forward to working with both the Senate and House, as well as the governor, toward fully funding affordable housing during the 2016 Legislative Session.

Jaimie Ross, Sadowski Coalition facilitator, Florida Housing Coalition president