

**FLORIDA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION**  
**Board Meeting**  
March 22, 2019  
Action Items



# FINANCE

## *Action*

### I. FINANCE

#### A. Proposed Update to Florida Housing's 401(a) Plan service requirement

##### 1. Background

- a) Beginning in January 1998, the Corporation has sponsored two retirement plans as a benefit to and investment in our employees. The first is a 457 deferred compensation plan which is available to employees who have completed 90 continuous days of employment. Participation in the plan is at the discretion of the employee who may defer a portion of their pre-tax compensation for deposit into the plan.
- b) The second is a 401(a) plan, which is available to employees who have completed twelve months of employment. Florida Housing's contribution to this plan is comprised of two parts: (1) a percentage of the eligible employees' compensation and (2) a match of a portion of the employee's deposits to the 457 deferred compensation plan. Employees fully vest in the 401(a) plan after three years of service.

##### 2. Present Situation

- a) During a review of the Corporation's retirement plans, staff reached out to other State Housing Finance Agencies (HFAs) to poll them on the waiting periods associated with their retirement plans. Fifteen states responded; most offer plans similar to Florida Housing's. The responses show that the waiting periods associated with our retirement plans were much longer than most other HFAs, especially the waiting period for our 401a plan.
- b) Changing the service requirement for the 401(a) plan to match the requirement for the 457 plan will encourage participation in the deferred compensation plan by accelerating employees' qualification for match contributions and allow Florida Housing to provide more competitive benefits.

##### 3. Recommendation

- a) Staff recommends that the Board authorize the plan trustees to change the service requirement for Florida Housing's 401(a) plan from 12 months to 90 days, effective January 1, 2019.

# HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS

## *Action*

### II. HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS

#### A. Request Approval of Changes to Rule 67-57 for the Homeownership Pool (“HOP”) Program

##### 1. Background/Present Situation

- a) A workshop regarding the overall direction of the HOME Investment Partnership Program was held on April 10, 2018 and a Rule development workshops was held on November 28, 2018 in order to solicit comments concerning the proposed changes to Rule Chapters 67-57, F.A.C.
- b) As a result of these workshops, staff has revised the rules governing the Homeownership Pool Program. Staff would like to proceed with the rule development process for this rule and requests the Board’s approval of the proposed Rule. A supplement to the Board Package has been provided which contains the proposed Rule.
- c) If the Board approves the proposed Rule, the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) will be published in the March 26, 2019 edition of the Florida Administrative Register. The NOPR will announce the Rule Hearing which is scheduled for April 17, 2019, in Tallahassee. Following review of the public comments received at the Rule Hearing and the comments received from the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee following its review of the NOPR, staff will proceed as follows:
  - (1) If modification of the proposed rules is not required, staff will file the proposed rules for adoption.
  - (2) If modification of the proposed rules is required, staff will prepare the necessary Notice of Change (NOC) to incorporate all proposed modifications to the proposed rule and, if required, will submit the NOC for Board approval.

##### 2. Recommendation

- a) Approve the proposed Rule and authorize staff to file the rules for adoption if a NOC is not required, and, if a NOC is required, authorize the Chair to determine whether a NOC makes material, substantive changes to the rule chapter. If the Chair determines that it does not, staff recommends that the Board approve such NOC without the requirement of another Board meeting. In the alternative, if the Chair determines that any NOC does make material, substantive changes to the rule chapter, staff will bring the required changes to the Rule at next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

### III. MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

#### A. Request for Applications (RFA) 2018-110 Housing Credit Financing for Affordable Housing Developments Located in Medium Counties

##### 1. Background/Present Situation

- a) On September 6, 2018, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) issued RFA 2018-110 offering \$14,397,104 of Competitive Housing Credits to Applicants proposing the development of affordable multifamily housing located in medium counties.
- b) The deadline for receipt of Applications was 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time, December 4, 2018.

##### 2. Present Situation

- a) Florida Housing received 191 Applications in response to this RFA. The Review Committee members, designated by the Executive Director, were Tracy Willis, Quality Assurance Credit Underwriting Administrator (Chair) Elizabeth Crane, Multifamily Programs Manager, Bill Aldinger, Assistant Policy Director, Ryan McKinless, Multifamily Programs Senior Analyst, Sofia Miles, Multifamily Programs Manager. Each member of the Review Committee independently evaluated and scored their assigned portions of the submitted Applications, consulting with non-committee staff and legal counsel as necessary and appropriate.
- b) At its March 12, 2019 Review Committee meeting, the individual committee members presented their scores and the Committee carried out the funding selection process in accordance with Section Five, B. of the RFA.
- c) The 2018-110 All Applications chart (provided as [Exhibit A](#)) lists the eligible and ineligible Applications. The eligible Applications (i.e., Applications that met all criteria to be eligible to be considered for funding) and the ineligible Applications are listed in assigned Application Number order.
- d) The Review Committee considered the following motions:
  - (1) A motion for the Review Committee to accept the scoring results as set out on Exhibit A and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on [Exhibit B](#);
  - (2) A motion to recommend to the Board that the Board adopts the scoring results as set out on Exhibit A and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on Exhibit B.
- e) The motions passed unanimously.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

- f) As outlined in subsection 67-48.0072(1), F.A.C., at the completion of all litigation and approval by the Board of all Recommended Orders with regard to this RFA, Florida Housing shall offer all Applicants within the funding range an invitation to enter credit underwriting.

### 3. Recommendation

- a) Approve the Committee's recommendations that the Board adopt the scoring results of the 191 Applications (set out on Exhibit A) and authorize the tentative selection of the 10 Applications (set out on Exhibit B) for funding.
- b) There is an unallocated balance of \$156,495 remaining. As provided in Section Five, B. of the RFA, any remaining funding will be distributed as approved by the Board.
- c) If no notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., staff will proceed to issue an invitation to enter credit underwriting to the Applications set out on Exhibit B.
- d) If a notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., then at the completion of all litigation, staff will present all Recommended Orders for Board approval prior to issuing invitations to enter credit underwriting to those Applicants in the funding range.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

#### **B. Request for Applications (RFA) 2018-116 SAIL Financing of Affordable Multifamily Housing Developments to be used in Conjunction with Tax-Exempt Bond Financing and Non-Competitive Housing Credits.**

##### **1. Background**

- a) On October 19, 2018, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) issued RFA 2018-116 offering \$70,967,000 of SAIL funding to Applicants proposing the development of affordable, multifamily housing for Elderly and Family demographics. The deadline for receipt of Applications was 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time, November 27, 2018.

##### **2. Present Situation**

- a) Florida Housing received 47 Applications in response to this RFA. The Review Committee members, designated by the Executive Director, were Lisa Nickerson, Multifamily Programs Administrator, Tim Kennedy, Assistant Director of Multifamily Programs, and Sofia Miles, Multifamily Programs Manager. Each member of the Review Committee independently evaluated and scored their assigned portions of the submitted Applications, consulting with non-committee staff and legal counsel as necessary and appropriate.
- b) At its March 5, 2019 Review Committee meeting, the individual committee members presented their scores and the Committee carried out the funding selection process in accordance with Section Five, B. of the RFA.
- c) The 2018-116 All Applications chart (provided as [Exhibit C](#)) lists the eligible and ineligible Applications. The eligible Applications (i.e., Applications that met all criteria to be eligible to be considered for funding) and the ineligible Applications are listed in assigned Application Number order.
- d) The Review Committee considered the following motions:
  - (1) A motion for the Review Committee to accept the scoring results as set out on Exhibit C and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on [Exhibit D](#);
  - (2) A motion to recommend to the Board that the Board adopts the scoring results as set out on Exhibit C and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on Exhibit D.
- e) The motions passed unanimously.
- f) As outlined in subsection 67-48.0072(1), F.A.C., at the completion of all litigation and approval by the Board of all Recommended Orders with regard to this RFA, Florida Housing shall offer all Applicants within the funding range an invitation to enter credit underwriting.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

#### 3. **Recommendation**

- a) Approve the Committee’s recommendations that the Board adopt the scoring results of the 47 Applications (set out on Exhibit C) and authorize the tentative selection of the 12 Applications (set out on Exhibit D) for funding.
- b) There is an unallocated balance of \$2,684,072.00 remaining. As provided in Section Five, B. of the RFA, any remaining funding will be distributed as approved by the Board.
- c) If no notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., staff will proceed to issue an invitation to enter credit underwriting to the Applications set out on Exhibit D.
- d) If a notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., then at the completion of all litigation, staff will present all Recommended Orders for Board approval prior to issuing invitations to enter credit underwriting to those Applicants in the funding range.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

#### C. Request for Applications (RFA) 2019-110 SAIL and Housing Credit Financing for the Construction of Workforce Housing for Hurricane Recovery in Monroe County

##### 1. Background

- a) On February 5, 2019, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) issued RFA 2019-105 offering \$2,776,032 of Competitive Housing Credits and \$11,260,000 of SAIL funding to Applicants proposing the construction of workforce housing in Monroe County.
- b) The deadline for receipt of Applications was 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time, February 20, 2019.

##### 2. Present Situation

- a) Florida Housing received 3 Applications in response to this RFA. The Review Committee members, designated by the Executive Director, were Lisa Nickerson, Multifamily Programs Administrator (Chair), Heather Greene, Multifamily Programs Manager, and Rebecca Sheffield, Multifamily Programs Manager. Each member of the Review Committee independently evaluated and scored their assigned portions of the submitted Applications, consulting with non-committee staff and legal counsel as necessary and appropriate.
- b) At its March 12, 2019 Review Committee meeting, the individual committee members presented their scores and the Committee carried out the funding selection process in accordance with Section Five, B. of the RFA.
- c) The 2019-110 All Applications chart (provided as [Exhibit E](#)) lists the eligible and ineligible Applications. The eligible Applications (i.e., Applications that met all criteria to be eligible to be considered for funding) and the ineligible Applications are listed in assigned Application Number order.
- d) The Review Committee considered the following motions:
  - (1) A motion for the Review Committee to accept the scoring results as set out on Exhibit E and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on Exhibit F;
  - (2) A motion to recommend to the Board that the Board adopt the scoring results as set out on Exhibit E and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on [Exhibit F](#).
- e) The motions passed unanimously.
- f) As outlined in subsection 67-48.0072(1), F.A.C., at the completion of all litigation and approval by the Board of all Recommended Orders with regard to this RFA, Florida Housing shall offer all Applicants within the funding range an invitation to enter credit underwriting.



## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

#### 3. **Recommendation**

- a) Approve the Committee’s recommendations that the Board adopt the scoring results of the 3 Applications (set out on Exhibit E) and authorize the tentative selection of the 2 Applications (set out on Exhibit F) for funding.
- b) There is an unallocated balance of \$5,000,000 in Workforce SAIL funding and \$925,344 in Housing Credit funding remaining. As provided in Section Five, B. of the RFA, any remaining funding will be distributed as approved by the Board.
- c) If no notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., staff will proceed to issue an invitation to enter credit underwriting to the Applications set out on Exhibit J.
- d) If a notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., then at the completion of all litigation, staff will present all Recommended Orders for Board approval prior to issuing invitations to enter credit underwriting to those Applicants in the funding range.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

#### **D. Request for Applications (RFA) 2019-106 Housing Credit and SAIL Financing for Homeless Housing Developments Located in Medium and Large Counties**

##### **1. Background**

- a) On January 9, 2019, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) issued RFA 2019-106 offering \$3,620,000 of Competitive Housing Credits and \$11,030,000 of SAIL funding to Applicants proposing the development of housing for Homeless individuals and families, that also include a portion of units for Persons with Special Needs located in Medium and Large Counties.
- b) The deadline for receipt of Applications was 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time, February 5, 2019.

##### **2. Present Situation**

- a) Florida Housing received 7 Applications in response to this RFA. The Review Committee members, designated by the Executive Director, were Elizabeth Crane, Multifamily Programs Manager (Chair); Bill Aldinger, Assistant Policy Director, Tracy Banner, Policy Administrator, Diana Fields, Policy Administrator, Rachael Grice, Multifamily Programs Manager, Jade Grubbs, Multifamily Programs Coordinator, and Elaine Roberts, Senior Supportive Housing Analyst. Each member of the Review Committee independently evaluated and scored their assigned portions of the submitted Applications, consulting with non-committee staff and legal counsel as necessary and appropriate.
- b) At its March 6, 2019 Review Committee meeting, the individual committee members presented their scores and the Committee carried out the funding selection process in accordance with Section Five, B. of the RFA.
- c) The 2019-106 All Applications chart (provided as [Exhibit G](#)) lists the eligible and ineligible Applications. The eligible Applications (i.e., Applications that met all criteria to be eligible to be considered for funding) and the ineligible Applications are listed in assigned Application Number order.
- d) The Review Committee considered the following motions:
  - (1) A motion for the Review Committee to accept the scoring results as set out on Exhibit G and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on Exhibit H;
  - (2) A motion to recommend to the Board that the Board adopts the scoring results as set out on Exhibit G and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on [Exhibit H](#).
- e) The motions passed unanimously.
- f) As outlined in subsection 67-48.0072(1), F.A.C., at the completion of all litigation and approval by the Board of all Recommended Orders with regard to this RFA, Florida Housing shall offer all Applicants within the funding range an invitation to enter credit underwriting.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

#### 3. Recommendation

- a) Approve the Committee’s recommendations that the Board adopt the scoring results of the 4 Applications (set out on Exhibit G) and authorize the tentative selection of the 2 Applications (set out on Exhibit H) for funding.
- b) There is an unallocated balance of \$333,200 of SAIL funding remaining. There is no unallocated Housing Credit funding remaining. As provided in Section Five, B. of the RFA, any remaining funding will be distributed as approved by the Board.
- c) If no notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., staff will proceed to issue an invitation to enter credit underwriting to the Applications set out on Exhibit H.
- d) If a notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., then at the completion of all litigation, staff will present all Recommended Orders for Board approval prior to issuing invitations to enter credit underwriting to those Applicants in the funding range.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action*

#### **E. Request for Approval to Allocate Remaining Competitive Housing Credit Funding**

##### **1. Background**

- a) At the February 1, 2019 meeting, Florida Housing’s Board adopted the review committee scoring results (set out on [Exhibit I](#)) and awarded Competitive Housing Credit funding to applications received in response to Request for Applications (RFA) 2018-113 Housing Credit Financing for the Preservation of Existing Affordable Multifamily Housing Developments (set out on Exhibit J). Five Applications were selected for funding and three Applications were deemed eligible but unfunded.<sup>1</sup> An unallocated balance of \$2,058,000 remained.
- b) Also, at the February 1, 2019 meeting, Florida Housing’s Board adopted the review committee scoring results and awarded Competitive Housing Credit funding to Applications received in response to Request for Applications (RFA) 2018-112 Housing Credit Financing for Affordable Housing Developments Located in Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Orange, Palm Beach, and Pinellas Counties. In accordance with the RFA funding selection process, seven Applications were selected for funding: two Applications in Broward County and five Applications in the other designated counties. An unallocated balance of \$2,598,352 remained.
- c) After the scoring and funding votes on RFA 2018-113 and 2018-112 at the February 1, 2019 meeting, Florida Housing’s Board approved Florida Housing’s recommendation to issue RFA 2019-110 SAIL and Housing Credit Financing for the Construction of Workforce Housing for Hurricane Recovery in Monroe County, using up to \$2,776,032 of the \$4,647,352 unallocated balance of Competitive Housing Credits that remained from RFAs 2018-112 and 2018-113.
- d) During the February 1, 2019 meeting, the Board inquired about whether remaining unallocated balance of \$1,880,320 in Competitive Housing Credit funding (after setting aside \$2,776,032 for RFA 2019-110) could be used to fund any of the remaining three eligible applications in RFA 2018-113. Florida Housing staff recommended waiting to determine whether RFA 2018-113 would be subject to litigation before deciding to fund additional eligible applications.

##### **2. Present Situation**

- a) The time frame to protest the scoring results and funding awards for RFA 2018-113 has passed, and the RFA is not subject to litigation. Florida Housing has \$1,880,320 in Competitive Housing Credit funding remaining unallocated from the RFA process.

##### **3. Recommendation**

- a) Authorize staff to allocate Competitive Housing Credit funding to the highest ranked eligible unfunded applications from RFA 2018-113 that can be fully funded, which are application numbers 2019-132C and 2019-125C, and invite those Applications to enter credit underwriting.

---

<sup>1</sup> The three remaining eligible applications in application number order are 2019-124C, 2019-125C, 2019-132C

# MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

## *Action Supplement*

### I. MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

#### A. Request for Applications (RFA) 2019-105 Housing Credit Financing to Provide Affordable Multifamily Rental Housing that is a Part of Local Revitalization Initiatives

##### 1. Background

- a) On January 9, 2019, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) issued RFA 2019-105 offering \$2,880,000 of Competitive Housing Credits to Applicants for the development of affordable, multifamily rental housing that is part of a broader neighborhood or local community revitalization effort.
- b) The deadline for receipt of Applications was 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time, February 6, 2019.

##### 2. Present Situation

- a) Florida Housing received 15 Applications in response to this RFA. The Review Committee members, designated by the Executive Director, were Rachael Grice, Multifamily Programs Manager (Chair), Diana Fields, Policy Administrator, Heather Greene, Multifamily Programs Manager, Jade Grubbs, Multifamily Programs Coordinator, Nancy Muller, Director of Policy/Special Programs, and Elaine Roberts, Senior Supportive Housing Analyst. Each member of the Review Committee independently evaluated and scored their assigned portions of the submitted Applications, consulting with non-committee staff and legal counsel as necessary and appropriate.
- b) At its March 15, 2019 Review Committee meeting, the individual committee members presented their scores and the Committee carried out the funding selection process in accordance with Section Five, B. of the RFA.
- c) The 2019-105 All Applications chart (provided as [Exhibit A](#)) lists the eligible and ineligible Applications. The eligible Applications (i.e., Applications that met all criteria to be eligible to be considered for funding) and the ineligible Applications are listed in assigned Application Number order.
- d) The Review Committee considered the following motions:
  - (1) A motion for the Review Committee to accept the scoring results as set out on Exhibit A and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on [Exhibit B](#);
  - (2) A motion to recommend to the Board that the Board adopt the scoring results as set out on Exhibit A and Applications tentatively selected for funding, as set out on Exhibit B.
- e) The motions passed unanimously.
- f) As outlined in subsection 67-48.0072(1), F.A.C., at the completion of all litigation and approval by the Board of all Recommended Orders with regard to this RFA, Florida Housing shall offer all Applicants within the funding range an invitation to enter credit underwriting.

## MULTIFAMILY PROGRAMS – ALLOCATIONS

### *Action Supplement*

#### 3. **Recommendation**

- a) Approve the Committee’s recommendations that the Board adopt the scoring results of the 18 Applications (set out on Exhibit A) and authorize the tentative selection of the 2 Applications (set out on Exhibit B) for funding.
- b) There is an unallocated balance of \$505,000 remaining. As provided in Section Five, B. of the RFA, any remaining funding will be distributed as approved by the Board.
- c) If no notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., staff will proceed to issue an invitation to enter credit underwriting to the Applications set out on Exhibit B.
- d) If a notice of protest or formal written protest is filed in accordance with Section 120.57(3), Fla. Stat., et. al., then at the completion of all litigation, staff will present all Recommended Orders for Board approval prior to issuing invitations to enter credit underwriting to those Applicants in the funding range.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SELECTION (PSS)

### *Action*

#### IV. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SELECTION (PSS)

##### A. Contract Renewal for Arbitrage Rebate Services

###### 1. Background

a) At the April 2014 meeting, the Board of Directors of Florida Housing authorized staff to enter into contract negotiations with the following firms for Arbitrage Rebate Services:

(1) BLX Group, LLC

(2) Hawkins, Delafield & Wood, LLP

b) The initial three-year term for both contracts began in June 2014. Contingent upon these firms satisfactorily performing its obligations under the contract as determined by Florida Housing, these contracts may be renewed three times for an additional one-year period. One optional renewal term remains.

###### 2. Present Situation

a) Florida Housing staff supports a renewal to extend the term of the contracts for the final one-year period.

###### 3. Recommendation

a) Staff believes that it is in the best interest of Florida Housing to continue to retain BLX Group, LLC and Hawkins, Delafield & Wood, LLP, pursuant to existing contracts and recommends the Board direct staff to proceed with the third and final one-year renewal option.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SELECTION (PSS)

### *Action*

#### **B. Request for Competitive Solicitation for Voice Conferencing Services**

##### **1. Background**

- a) On December 31, 2018, the State Term Contract for operator-assisted telephone services with BT Communications expired. Florida Housing uses these services for workshops and other public meetings so that the public can attend remotely, and the operator can assist with moderating discussions so that there is no audio overlap.

##### **2. Present Situation**

- a) On January 1, 2019, the Florida Department of Management Services implemented a new agreement with CenturyLink for these services; however, Staff has found that the terms of the new contract are potentially cost-prohibitive for Florida Housing's needs. Staff are actively exploring and testing other options for these types of services.

##### **3. Recommendation**

- a) Authorize staff to issue a competitive solicitation in order to select a firm to provide Voice Conferencing Services in the event that Staff's research shows that an appropriate solution will likely exceed the bid threshold of \$35,000.



## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SELECTION (PSS)

### *Action*

#### C. Single Source Procurement for the Affordable Housing Locator Subscription Services

##### 1. Background

- a) In August 2005 and May 2008, Florida Housing's Board of Directors authorized staff to carry out a solicitation process to select an entity to develop and maintain a web-based housing Locator to help Floridians conduct searches for available rental housing financed by Florida Housing. The goal was to create an adaptable system to enable the eventual inclusion of any affordable rental unit statewide that met Florida Housing's inclusion standards (for example, units that serve households at or below 140% of area median income).
- b) At the conclusion of both solicitations, the Board authorized staff to enter into contract negotiations with SocialServe.com. The Locator services, including the web-based search engine ([www.floridahousingsearch.org](http://www.floridahousingsearch.org)) and a staffed call center, launched in October 2006.
- c) At the December 2013 meeting, the Board authorized a single source procurement to purchase housing Locator services directly from Non-Profit Industries d/b/a SocialServe.com, with a contract term of up to three years.
- d) In August 2015, Emphasys Computer Solutions, Inc. acquired the technology assets of Non-Profit Industries d/b/a SocialServe.com. The Locator continues to be managed by the same staff in the same manner as it was before this transition.
- e) At the October 2016 and 2017 meetings, the Board authorized the Board authorized a single source procurement to purchase housing Locator services directly from Emphasys Computer Solutions, Inc., for a period of one year.
- f) In the last two years, Florida Housing has also utilized the Locator's on-line and call center services to assist households, displaced by Hurricane Irma, Maria or Michael, find short and long-term rental housing.

##### 2. Present Situation

- a) On March 24, 2019, the term for Florida Housing's current contract with Emphasys Computer Solutions, Inc., will expire.
- b) The Locator service has been very successful. It is well-respected for being a very user-friendly service that allows people to locate available housing that best fits their individual and family needs. Throughout the past decade, Florida Housing has never received a complaint about the Locator or attendant call center services.
- c) Florida Housing staff continues to be very satisfied with the Locator's growth in use by consumers and landlords, as well as the provision of services by Emphasys to consumers who may need help with the site, advocates for consumers, landlords and Florida Housing itself. With the end of the current contract approaching, the staff has been researching prospective vendors that may be qualified and interested in applying to manage the Locator services with the same capacity and quality as the current Locator service.
- d) The services are widely used by supportive services agencies, homeless coalitions and legislators' staffs in their efforts to assist Floridians find

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SELECTION (PSS)

### *Action*

affordable and available rental housing that meets their needs. The on-line and call center services are ADA certified for use by persons with disabilities. Individuals can access the information online, in many languages, 24 hours a day. They can easily search for available rental housing using a wide variety of search criteria with special mapping features and receive apartment listings that provide a variety of important information about each unit. In addition, the site connects people to other housing and community resources through website links and provides helpful tools for renters such as an affordability calculator, rental checklist, and renter rights and responsibilities information.

- e) The toll-free call center is staffed by specialists who are trained to work with both the public and landlords, with bilingual capacity to assist Spanish-speaking persons. The call center vendor is a non-profit organization that strives to train and hire persons with disabilities, formerly homeless individuals, and those with other special needs. Many of the call center specialists have had experiences similar to the consumers they are now assisting to find housing. Florida Housing has not found any other rental housing locator businesses that provide the call center services. These call center services have been instrumental when households need additional assistance searching for a home. The call center's capacity to quickly identify available rental housing for displaced households have also been extremely useful after a disaster.
- f) There are nearly 200,000 units now registered in the Locator's database.
- g) The services listed below that Florida Housing obtains from Emphasys cannot be replicated by any other vendor in the market:
  - (1) Assisting landlords to manage listings by helping to register units, monitoring for accuracy and helping them keep the listings current. It is not an "inventory style" listings like other services; it is real-time availability that is typically not offered through other housing locators and is critical to State disaster response needs as well as for locating available properties in a time-sensitive/time-critical manner. Listings are required to be updated every 10 to 28 business days;
  - (2) Screening properties for listing accuracy and Fair Housing violations and removing those in non-compliance;
  - (3) Backing up its online services with a bilingual toll free call center comprised of housing-specific trained customer service specialists who help tenants locate housing, help landlords initially register and regularly update listings, and support families displaced as a result of natural disasters and economic situations;
  - (4) Conducting rental housing searches for households that do not have access to the internet;
  - (5) In addition to customer specialists at the call center, providing professionally trained case managers who assist households with special needs and/or are in crisis to search for temporary and permanent housing that meets their immediate and/or long term needs;
  - (6) Contacting and working with households directly upon request by staff from Florida Housing, State agencies and Legislators' offices; and

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SELECTION (PSS)

### *Action*

- (7) Assisting state and local emergency management systems in helping displaced households find housing local, regional and statewide. A component of disaster services is to update available housing stock in its database on a 24/7 basis and conduct ongoing searches for additional housing units and options.
- h) As a result of our research, and after consideration of the standards Florida Housing expects for a Housing Locator service and the available vendor options, Florida Housing's staff believes that Emphasys continues to be the only vendor with the capacity, qualifications and experience to maintain the level of service that Florida Housing and the State of Florida relies on and has come to expect for Locator services.

### 3. **Recommendation**

- a) Staff believes that it is in the best interest of Florida Housing to continue with these services and proceed with a new one-year contract. Staff requests authorization to enter into negotiations for a single source contract with Emphasys Computer Solutions, Inc, for this purpose.