

2025 Legislative Agenda

Affordable Housing for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

Prepared by The Arc of Florida 12/2/24

Background:

- Florida leads the country with its commitment to finance affordable housing options through grants and access to Low Income Housing Tax Credits for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD).
- Between 2013 and 2020, the Florida Legislature provided \$64.6 million to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) for affordable housing initiatives targeting individuals with I/DD. \$10 million was appropriated each year until 2018, with an additional \$3.1 million added in 2019, and \$11.5 million appropriated in 2020.
- These funds allowed the FHFC to finance 110 housing developments serving 1,308 individuals, using different models like community residential homes, supported living units, and larger multifamily properties, which qualified for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. The original \$10 million appropriation in 2013 was spent over two years, and subsequent appropriations were also carried forward to design effective housing models with stakeholder input.
- Since 2014, 636 people with I/DD have been able to move into small community group homes and small supported living units. In addition, nine larger Low Income Tax Credit apartment communities were built with a total of 732 units scattered throughout the state.
- A total of \$27.4 million in grant funding garnered \$115,978,970 in federal tax credits.
- Private not-for-profit agencies have received \$37 million in grant funding.
- The last of the \$64.6 million was bid out in the Fall of 2024; funding is now exhausted.

Key Legislative Requests:

1. Appropriate \$25 million to the FHFC to fund continuation of the competitive grant program for affordable housing for the IDD population. This request accounts for inflation and the dramatic increase in the cost of construction materials. (About 25% between 2020 and 2021 alone.¹)
2. Modify proviso language from the 2015 General Appropriations Act (Specific Appropriation 2240) as follows: "From the funds in Specific Appropriation 2240, ~~\$10,000,000~~ \$25,000,000 is provided to fund a competitive grant program for housing developments designed, constructed, and targeted for persons with developmental disabilities

¹ US Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Commissioner's Corner," August 26, 2021: <https://www.bls.gov/blog/2021/a-look-at-the-price-of-construction.htm>

as defined in section 393.063, Florida Statutes. Private nonprofit organizations whose primary mission includes serving persons with developmental disabilities as defined in section 393.063, Florida Statutes, shall be eligible for these grant funds. Housing projects funded with these grants may include community residential homes as defined in section 419.001, Florida Statutes, or individual housing units, and may include new construction ~~and renovation or acquisition~~ of existing housing units. In evaluating proposals for these funds, the FHFC shall consider: the extent to which funds from local and other sources will be used by the applicant to leverage the grant funds provided under this section; employment opportunities and supports that will be available to residents of the proposed housing; a plan for residents to effectively and efficiently access community-based services, resources, and amenities; and partnerships with other supportive services agencies.”

3. Retain flexibility for FHFC to collaborate with stakeholders like the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to determine optimal housing models (e.g., community residential homes, supported living units, larger multifamily apartment communities).

4. Collaborate with state agencies like the Department of Children and Families, Office on Homelessness, and APD to create a comprehensive strategy promoting housing stability, self-sufficiency, and community access for the IDD population.

Justification:

- Past funding allowed rapid creation of more than 110 housing developments through public-private partnerships.
- Affordable housing deepens community integration, improves quality of life, and increases independence and self-sufficiency for IDD individuals.
- Investment in IDD housing has potential to reduce costly emergency/crisis housing placements and high-end healthcare utilization.
- The program aligns with state objectives to support communities, provide person-centered services, and meet the needs of Florida's disability population.
- Continue pairing federal affordable housing tax credits with state general revenue GAP funding will create additional much needed apartment housing units for independent living.
- A 2021 study procured by the FHFC estimates that almost 3,000 individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities need specialized/affordable housing to live independently.²

² 2021 Florida Assessment of Housing for Special Needs and Homeless Individuals, produced by The Corporation for Supportive Housing, funded by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, page 15.

8/31/2024