

# FLORIDA HOUSING COALITION NEWS

## Center for Racial Equity Announces The Winners of the Competitive Grant Application for Two-Years of Assistance to Close the Gap



The Center for Racial Equity, Florida Housing Coalition's initiative that provides support for communities looking to advance racial equity in housing, announced the winners of its competitive

grant program entitled **Closing the Racial Gap in Homeownership** (Closing the Gap). Both the City of Fort Pierce, and the City of West Palm Beach will receive 24 months of technical assistance to help close the homeownership gap amongst Black and white families in their respective communities. The Coalition will engage with public and private sector partners and stakeholders to address the history, the policies, and the programs that impact racial inequity in housing and assist the community with implementing solutions.

Closing the Gap is the seminal program of the Center for Racial Equity. With funding in place from major underwriters Bank of America and Wells Fargo, the program provides a 3:1 match in technical assistance and resources over a two-year period. "Bank of America is helping advance racial equality and economic opportunity, with a particular focus on helping create opportunity for people and communities of color," said Gene Schaefer, Miami market president for Bank of America. "Having a safe and affordable place to call home is essential to help lay the foundation for wellness, dignity, and economic opportunity," said Eileen Fitzgerald, head of housing affordability philanthropy with Wells Fargo.

### The City of Fort Pierce is Ready for Change

"A stark racial divide in homeownership and housing affordability exists within the City of Fort Pierce," stated the City in its grant application. Embarking on an initiative entitled "One Fort Pierce" – the community is dedicated toward bridging the silent racial and economic divide that exists within its city limits. With the recent success of their Local Foods, Local Places Initiative, the City has a proven track record of implementing community wide solutions and garnering community wide support for needed improvements. "With a solid track record in place, and an eagerness to tackle the hard issues facing their community, the City of Fort Pierce is well-positioned to take advantage of the help that the Closing the Gap program can provide," stated Florida Housing Coalition CEO and President Jaimie Ross.



### West Palm Beach Communities of Color Need Affordable Housing

"Communities of color in West Palm Beach are negatively impacted by high rent burdens, stagnating or decreasing wages, history of predatory lending for black borrowers and residential segregation," stated the City in its application. Mayor Keith James, as part of his Taskforce for Racial and Ethnic Equality, has committed resources and city priorities to finding solutions for affordable housing within city limits. "The Mayor's leadership, and the eagerness of the city departments to implement solutions for affordable housing has the Florida Housing Coalition excited about working with them," added Ross.



WEST PALM BEACH