



Message From the CEO

BY JAIMIE ROSS

2021 was tumultuous for the Sadowski Coalition and housing advocates across the state. Decades of trust fund sweeps ended in a permanent sweep of half the Sadowski trust funds and a promise to stop further sweeps. The Legislative Wrap Up article details the changes and highlights the fact that even with a sweep of half the housing money, this year's appropriation was the largest for housing in 13 years. The permanent sweep, coupled with a promise of no more sweeps, and recurring revenue that can be relied upon, brings us to a new era for Sadowski funding.

For the Florida Housing Coalition, a more impactful new era for housing is our organization's commitment to racial equity in housing. The national civil rights movement sparked by the killing of George Floyd, spurred action by the Florida Housing Coalition's staff and board. We launched the Center for Racial Equity, with a BIPOC Support and Connect Program; a Closing the Gap Program; and a Public Policy Series on racial equity, among other initiatives. All these programs are detailed on the Center for Racial Equity's website (centerforracialequity.org). We found our partners such as Bank of America and Wells Fargo eager to join us in this effort and we discovered new partners, such as TECO, specifically due to their enthusiasm for joining the effort toward racial equity in housing. We are so grateful for all the partner support for the Center for Racial Equity.

The focus of this year's statewide annual housing conference is racial equity in housing. While the Center for Racial Equity is a new major initiative at the Coalition, it is a program woven into all our work. And while the focus for this year's conference is racial equity in housing, it does not stand apart from our conferences going forward. Instead, racial equity in housing will be the lens through

which we do all our work at the Florida Housing Coalition, whether within a program specifically borne of the Center for Racial Equity or not.

We must work to end the disparity in homeownership between white households and all racially marginalized households in Florida. We must work to end segregation in housing. And we will lift-up communities as models for others when substantial strides are made in land use and revenue policies toward creating inclusive communities that facilitate wealth building for historically marginalized populations. It has been heartening to see how supportive our members and partners have been with this intentional focus.

The last major initiative launched at the Coalition was over twenty years ago, with the Florida Community Land Trust Institute. This conference marks a milestone for the Florida CLT Institute. With support from Freddie Mac, we developed and implemented a national pilot for a CLT Certification program. At this year's conference, we will celebrate the first six CLTs in Florida to have earned the Certification. These CLTs, ranging in experience from nascent to fully established and high capacity, have been through our training and are operating their CLTs using what we endorse as best practices. The certification of a CLT gives confidence to lenders, local governments, and philanthropy. Our now mature CLT Institute will be coupled with the work of the Center for Racial Equity as we help communities to create homeownership opportunities for lower income households and those who have suffered the consequences of a long history of racism in housing. The synergy between so much of our work internally and the work of our member organizations and partners toward racial equity in housing gives all of us a taste of tangible progress.

THE FLORIDA HOUSING COALITION IS HONORED TO STAND SIDE BY SIDE WITH OUR FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE, OUR SPONSORS, AND OUR ALLIES.

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