

2023 CONSENSUS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA UNITED WAY OF FLORIDA



Housing Affordability

Top Markets for Rent Increases (Jun. 2022)

1

Fort Myers, FL

Average Rent: \$2,162 / Rent YY: 29.15%

2

Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL

Average Rent: \$2,848 / Rent YY: 28.35%

3

North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL

Average Rent: \$2,393 / Rent YY: 24.18%

*Based on data compiled by the Florida Atlantic University Real Estate Initiative, Florida Gulf Coast University's Lucas Institute for Real Estate Development & Finance, and the Alabama Center of Real Estate at the University of Alabama.

Florida is in the midst of a housing crisis with some metrics indicating the state has become one of the least affordable in the nation. Cost-burdened and extremely cost-burdened households have exploded in recent years. Our most vulnerable residents are challenged by extreme affordability gaps, a loss of affordable units, and ongoing market appreciation. Affordable housing is considered to be no more than 30% of income.

Cost increases have been driven, in large part, by demand due to an influx of new residents and out-of-state investment buyers. The impact has been most severe on the ALICE families that the United Way serves, including the many service industry workers who help support Florida's tourism-based economy. As skyrocketing housing costs push residents further away from their employers and disincentivize prospective talent from relocating to the state, Florida's workforce development efforts will also be hampered, which will have cascading economic consequences

Evictions

Florida's high housing costs, coupled with dramatic spikes in unemployment relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, have resulted in a significant increase in evictions throughout the state. In addition to the immediate negative effects associated with housing loss, evictions also create a lasting mark that follows tenants and can disqualify them from future housing opportunities. Because of disparate and sometimes onerous administrative requirements, various local and statewide rental assistance programs have been slow to disburse federal aid dollars, blunting the positive impact of these resources.

Affordable Housing Trust Funds

The 1992 passage of the William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Act created for the first time a dedicated funding source for affordable housing, which is fueled by documentary stamp taxes on real estate transactions. However, in a trend that began in the early 2000s and accelerated during the Great Recession, the trust funds have been routinely raided by the Florida Legislature. Over the last two decades, \$2.3 billion has been diverted to fund other priorities.

Although the 2022 state budget included the most money for affordable housing in many years, the majority of this funding is restricted to homeownership. Considering the barriers to homeownership that many families face—including locating an affordable property and securing financing—more must be done to support renters and increase the number of affordable rental units.

PROPOSED CHANGES

Florida's United Ways urge the Florida Legislature to:

- INCREASE overall funding for affordable housing programs, including SHIP and SAIL.
- FOCUS resources on programs and initiatives that incentivize the construction of affordable rental units.
- SUPPORT local governments and provide resources to help facilitate local solutions.
- PASS legislation to promote eviction mitigation and allow for tenants to seal eviction records.