

Affordable Housing Policies in Florida, 2024

Report 24-10

December 2024



OPPAGA

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

Affordable Housing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The statutory goal of Florida’s housing strategy is to ensure that every resident has safe, decent, and affordable housing. State law requires using policies that encourage housing production and rehabilitation programs to accomplish this statutory goal. The state housing strategy requires that state and local governments collaborate with communities and the private sector for housing production and rehabilitation programs. The State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) provides funds to local governments as an incentive for creating partnerships to produce and preserve affordable housing for renting and homeownership.

To identify affordable housing policies implemented by Florida’s local governments, the effectiveness of those policies, and best practices associated with those policies, OPPAGA surveyed county and municipal governments and examined data reported to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation for Florida’s SHIP entities for Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20; this data showed that local government use of SHIP funds has a positive impact on communities through assistance strategies that provide access to affordable housing for very low, low, and moderate income families. In addition, SHIP program participants implemented incentive strategies—such as impact fee modifications, public lands inventories, and flexible densities—to support affordable housing.

OPPAGA also surveyed county and municipal governments to gather information on local affordable housing policies, policy effectiveness, and interlocal cooperation related to affordable housing. In addition, OPPAGA surveyed counties and municipalities about best practices the local governments have identified for implementing affordable housing policies and reviewed research about best practices. Most survey respondents reported encouraging mixed-income projects, utilizing expedited permitting, and implementing flexible zoning to support affordable housing. Affordable housing policies identified as most effective varied by type of local government entity and population size. Many counties and cities reported engaging in interlocal cooperation to support affordable housing in local jurisdictions. Based on survey responses and literature reviewed, OPPAGA identified several best practices for supporting affordable housing, including authorizing the use of accessory dwelling units, re-zoning to allow commercial-residential mixed-use development, and setting aside a portion of the units as affordable or for specific populations (e.g., teachers, law enforcement or the homeless).

REPORT SCOPE

Section [420.0003\(3\)\(d\)\(2\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, directs OPPAGA to examine affordable housing policies enacted by Florida’s local governments, effectiveness of such policies, and which policies constitute best practices for replication across the state. OPPAGA also examined the extent to which interlocal cooperation is used, effective, or hampered.

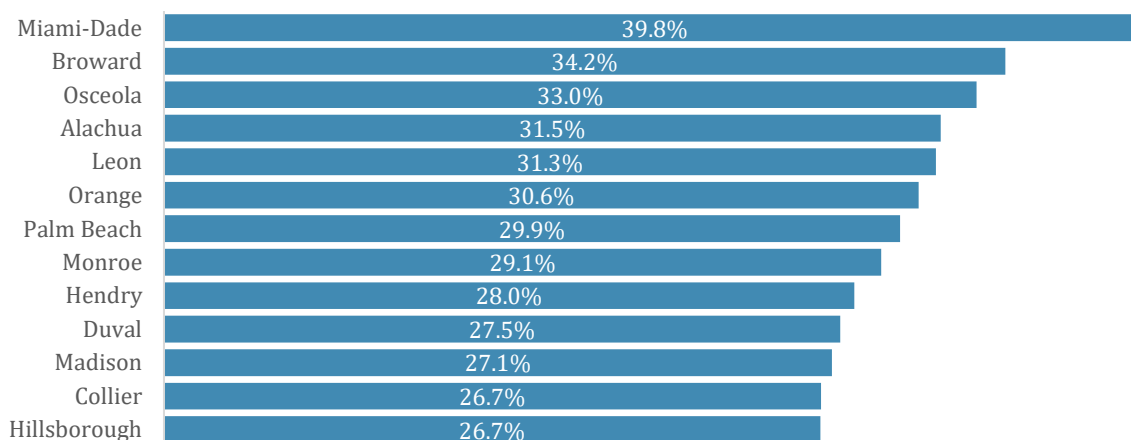
BACKGROUND

Housing is not affordable for millions of Floridians. According to one study, as of 2022, 37% of households in Florida did not have affordable housing. Florida ranks fourth highest in the percentage of cost burdened households in the United States.¹ Under Florida law, for households with low or moderate incomes, housing is considered *affordable* if it costs no more than 30% of a household's gross annual income.² Households are considered *cost burdened* if housing costs exceed 30% of a household's gross annual income and *severely cost burdened* if housing costs exceed 50% of a household's gross annual income. In 2022, the University of Florida's Shimberg Center for Housing Studies estimated that 18% (1.5 million) of Florida's 8.6 million households spent 30% to 50% of gross household income on housing, and an additional 16% (1.4 million) spent more than 50% of gross household income on housing.³

In 2022, the percentage of cost burdened households in each county ranged from 11% (Dixie County) to 46% (Miami-Dade County). The 10 counties with the largest proportion of cost burdened households accounted for 54% of all cost burdened households in Florida; six were coastal counties.⁴ The majority (83%) of Florida's 2.9 million cost burdened households are also low income households.⁵ Furthermore, 28% of the state's 8.6 million households were low income and cost burdened in 2022. The proportion of low income, cost burdened households in each county ranged from 9% (Dixie County) to 40% (Miami-Dade County). (See Exhibit 1 for the 13 counties with the highest proportion of low income, cost burdened residents.)

Exhibit 1

Miami-Dade County Has the Largest Proportion of Low Income, Cost Burdened Residents



Source: OPPAGA analysis of Shimberg Center for Housing Studies 2022 affordable housing data, which is based on a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy dataset.

¹ Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. *The State of the Nation's Housing*. 2024. This ranking is based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey one-year estimates.

² According to s. [420.0004\(3\)](#), *F.S.*, housing costs include taxes, insurance, and utilities.

³ These estimates and projections were compiled by the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, based on a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy dataset and population projections by the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research.

⁴ The 10 counties with the highest portion of cost burdened households (from highest to lowest): Miami-Dade (46.2%), Broward (42.0%), Monroe (40.1%), Osceola (37.9%), Palm Beach (37.1%), Orange (36.5%), Leon (35.6%), Alachua (35.2%), Hillsborough (32.8%), and Collier (32.5%).

⁵ Section [420.0004\(11\)](#), *F.S.*, defines low income persons as one or more natural persons or a family, the total annual adjusted gross household income of which does not exceed 80% of the median annual adjusted gross income for households within the state, or 80% of the median annual adjusted gross income for households within the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) or, if not within an MSA, within the county in which the person or family resides, whichever is greater.

Florida's Housing Strategy

Florida law establishes a housing strategy with the statutory goal to ensure that every Floridian has safe, decent, and affordable housing.⁶ The state housing strategy requires that state and local governments collaborate with communities and the private sector and includes financial and regulatory commitments to accomplish this goal. The 2023 Legislature enacted the Live Local Act, establishing general policies for housing production and rehabilitation programs, public-private partnerships, preservation of housing stock, and unique housing needs, with an emphasis on assisting the neediest persons.⁷

The Live Local Act preempts local government requirements regarding zoning, density, and height to allow for streamlined development of affordable housing in commercial, industrial, and mixed-use zoned areas under certain circumstances. The current law specifies that a county must authorize multifamily and mixed-use residential as allowable uses in any area zoned for commercial, industrial, or mixed use if at least 40% of the residential units in a proposed multifamily rental development are rental units that, for a period of at least 30 years, are affordable as defined in s. [420.0004](#), *Florida Statutes*.⁸

State Housing Funding for Local Governments

The State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) provides funds to local governments as an incentive for creating partnerships to produce and preserve affordable housing. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) administers the SHIP program.⁹ FHFC distributes SHIP funds to all 67 counties and eligible municipalities using a population-based formula.¹⁰ The minimum allocation to a county is \$350,000. The 2024 Legislature appropriated \$174 million to the SHIP program for Fiscal Year 2024-25.¹¹

To be eligible to receive SHIP funding, s. [420.9072\(2\)\(a\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, requires a county or municipality to submit its local housing assistance plan (LHAP) and amendments to FHFC for approval. Each county or eligible municipality's LHAP must specify how the local government will make affordable residential units available to persons of very low, low, or moderate income and to persons with special housing needs including homeless people and the elderly. LHAPs are effective up to three years. FHFC must approve a plan before it can distribute funds to SHIP program entities. State law allows local governments to enter into an interlocal agreement for establishing a joint local housing assistance plan.¹² FHFC disburses SHIP funds to each county or eligible municipality to be administered according to the interlocal agreement.

⁶ Section [420.0003\(1\)](#), *F.S.*

⁷ Chapter [2023-17](#), *Laws of Florida*.

⁸ Chapter [2024-188](#), *Laws of Florida*.

⁹ FHFC was initially legislatively created in 1980 as part of the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Revisions by the 1997 Legislature resulted in the corporation becoming a public-private entity to streamline processes and operate more effectively within the real estate and financial markets. Additional legislation in 2011 moved FHFC from DCA to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

¹⁰ Under s. [420.9071\(10\)](#), *F.S.*, an eligible municipality means a municipality that is eligible for federal Community Development Block Grant entitlement moneys as an entitlement community identified in 24 C.F.R. s. 570, subpart D, Entitlement Grants, or a non-entitlement municipality that is receiving local housing distribution funds under an interlocal agreement that provides for possession and administrative control of funds to be transferred to the non-entitlement municipality.

¹¹ The Legislature specified that \$663,600 of this appropriation be used for training and technical assistance provided through the Affordable Housing Catalyst Program. FHFC contracts with the Florida Housing Coalition to implement the program which provides community-based organizations and state and local governments assistance including training on the development of affordable housing programs, public/private partnerships, local housing assistance plans, and regulatory reforms.

¹² Section [420.9072\(5\)\(a\)](#), *F.S.*

State law requires that each plan describe the local housing **assistance strategies** to be implemented by SHIP program participants.¹³ These assistance strategies include housing construction, rehabilitation, repair, or finance programs. For each strategy or use of SHIP Funds, FHFC requires program participants' plans to include

- proposed dollar amount of SHIP funds to be used for each strategy for each fiscal year;
- estimated number of households proposed to be served for each strategy and income category;
- maximum amount of funding per unit for each strategy and the estimated amount of funding for new construction, rehabilitation or non-construction activities; and
- maximum sales price of new and existing units.

State law specifies criteria for awards made to eligible sponsors or persons that affect how SHIP program participants spend funds. Specifically, program participants must reserve at least 65% of SHIP funds for homeownership for eligible persons; up to 25% for rental housing; at least 75% for construction, rehabilitation, or emergency repair of affordable, eligible housing; and a minimum of 20% to serve persons with special needs as defined in s. [420.0004](#), *Florida Statutes*.¹⁴

In addition to assistance strategies, state law requires that the county or eligible municipality amend the plan within 12 months of its adoption to incorporate local housing **incentive strategies**.¹⁵ Incentive strategies are local regulatory reforms or incentive programs to encourage or facilitate affordable housing production. State law requires that local housing incentive strategies include, at a minimum, the assurance that permits for affordable housing projects are expedited and an ongoing review process is in place for local policies, ordinances, and plan provisions that increase housing costs.¹⁶

State law also requires the governing board of a county or eligible municipality receiving SHIP program funds to establish an affordable housing advisory committee to review and provide recommendations on affordable housing incentive strategies.¹⁷ Each advisory committee must submit an annual report to the local government and the Affordable Housing Catalyst Program provider that includes recommendations on the implementation of affordable housing incentives. Within 90 days after the date of receipt of the advisory committee's evaluation and recommendation, state law requires the local government to adopt an amendment to its local housing assistance plan to incorporate the local housing incentive strategies it will implement within its jurisdiction.¹⁸

Local Government Expenditures on Affordable Housing

In addition to SHIP funds, counties and municipalities spend local funds on affordable housing. State law requires county and municipal budget officers to report to the Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research the government's annual expenditures for financing, acquiring, constructing, reconstructing, or rehabilitating affordable housing.¹⁹ For Fiscal Year 2023-24, county governments reported total expenditures of \$1.16 billion on affordable housing activities, of which \$260.1 million

¹³ Section [420.9075\(1\)](#), F.S.

¹⁴ Section [420.9075\(5\)](#), F.S.

¹⁵ Section [420.9076](#), F.S.

¹⁶ Section [420.9071\(18\)](#), F.S. also requires a schedule for implementing the incentive strategies.

¹⁷ Section [420.9076\(4\)](#), F.S. The governing board of a county or municipality is responsible for appointing the members of the affordable housing advisory committee. Counties and municipalities may create and jointly appoint an advisory committee through interlocal agreements.

¹⁸ Section [420.9076\(6\)](#), F.S.

¹⁹ Section [129.03](#), F.S. and s. [166.241](#), F.S., for counties and municipalities, respectively.

(22.4%) came from local sources, \$669.2 million (57.6%) came from state sources, \$229.3 million (19.7%) came from federal sources, and \$3.3 million (less than 1.0%) came from other sources.²⁰ Municipal governments reported total expenditures of \$224.7 million on affordable housing activities, of which \$67.5 million (30.0%) came from local sources, \$76.9 million (34.2%) came from state sources, \$69.2 million (30.8%) came from federal sources, and \$11.1 million (4.9%) came from other sources.²¹

FINDINGS

OPPAGA's review of State Housing Initiatives Partnership program data showed that local government use of SHIP funds had a positive impact on communities. From Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20, \$212.8 million in SHIP funding aided 9,031 homeownership units, thereby enhancing homeownership opportunities for very low, low, and moderate income families through various rehabilitation and assistance programs. During the same period, SHIP funding enabled local governments to support rental housing through various assistance strategies. From Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20, \$37.5 million in SHIP funding assisted 4,487 rental units, enhancing stability and quality for very low, low, and moderate income families.

OPPAGA's surveys of county and municipal officials found that local governments are utilizing various affordable housing policies, identifying best practices, and engaging in interlocal cooperation. Most survey respondents reported encouraging mixed-income projects, utilizing expedited permitting, and implementing flexible zoning to support affordable housing. Policies identified as most effective by survey respondents varied by type of local government entity and population size, and many counties and cities reported engaging in interlocal cooperation to support affordable housing in local jurisdictions. Based on OPPAGA's survey and literature reviewed, OPPAGA identified several best practices for supporting affordable housing, including authorizing the use of accessory dwelling units, re-zoning to allow commercial-residential mixed-use development, and setting aside a portion of the units as affordable or for specific populations (e.g., teachers, law enforcement or the homeless).

SHIP funds positively impact Florida's communities through assistance programs that provide access to affordable housing

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation oversees activities, offers training, and gathers performance and management data from local governments participating in the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program. OPPAGA received data from the FHFC, which is required by statute to collect information including the number of units, mortgages by income categories, and details about local incentive strategies or plans implemented through its affordable housing programs.²² From Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20, 112 Florida local governments spent \$250.3 million in SHIP program

²⁰ Section [129.03\(3\)\(d\)](#), *F.S.* requires county budget officers to submit final budgets and economic status to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research. The current analysis consists of 55 counties. Baker County did not submit an expenditure report for Fiscal Year 2023-24.

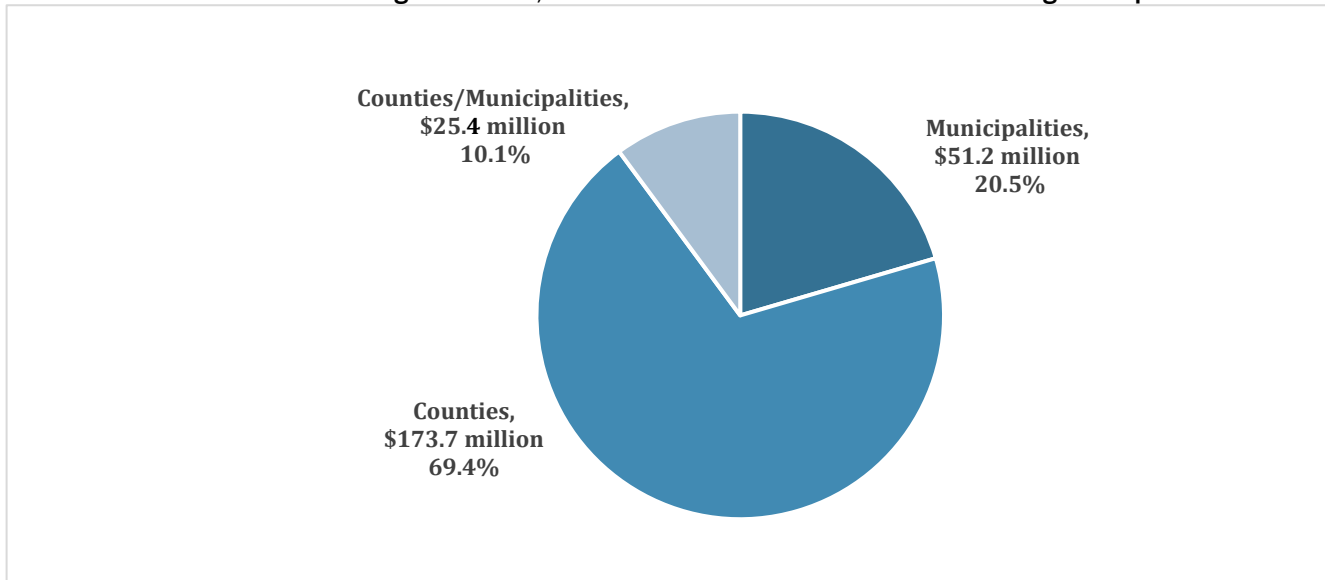
²¹ For Fiscal Year 2023-24, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research received affordable housing expenditures reported in the final adopted budgets from 65 municipalities; 134 municipalities did not submit financial data to the office.

²² Section [420.9075\(10\)](#), *F.S.*

funds on local housing assistance strategies.^{23, 24} Florida’s counties spent \$173.7 million (69.4%) of these funds, while municipalities spent \$51.2 million (20.5%) and counties that had interlocal agreements with municipalities spent \$25.4 million (10.1%). (See Exhibit 2.)

Exhibit 2

From Fiscal Years 2017-18 Through 2019-20, Counties Accounted for 69.4% of SHIP Program Expenditures



Source: OPPAGA analysis of SHIP data reported by local governments to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

Local governments (i.e., counties and municipalities) receiving SHIP funds annually reported expenditures and units for 23 assistance strategies, divided between homeownership and rental, adopted in the local housing assistance plans.²⁵ (See Appendix A for a list of the 23 assistance strategies.) From Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20, local governments reported spending at least 65.0% of SHIP funding on homeownership assistance and up to 25.0% for rental housing, as required by state law.²⁶ During the three Fiscal Year period, local governments reported spending \$212.8 million (85.0%) of funds on 11 homeownership strategies and \$37.5 million (15.0%) on 11 rental housing strategies.²⁷ (See Exhibit 3.)

²³ This number represents the unique number of local governments reporting during the three fiscal-year period. The actual number of entities reporting ranged from 111 entities in Fiscal Years 2017-18 and 2018-19 to 108 reporting in Fiscal Year 2019-20. According to FHFC, eight counties have interlocal agreements with the eligible SHIP municipalities within the county to jointly expend and report on SHIP program funds and units. These eight counties are Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Escambia, Flagler, Okaloosa, Osceola, and Sarasota. Coconut Creek entered into an interlocal agreement with Broward County in 2018. The City of Coconut Creek reported its own expenditures and units for Fiscal Year 2017-18. Starting in Fiscal Year 2022-23, Osceola County has an interlocal agreement with the City of St. Cloud.

²⁴ OPPAGA analyzed expenditures and units reported to FHFC for 61 counties, 45 municipalities, and 6 county-municipality interlocal agreements receiving SHIP program funds for Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20. According to FHFC, local governments have three years to expend SHIP program funds. The most recent closed out fiscal year for reporting expenditures is Fiscal Year 2020-21. However, there were no funds appropriated for the SHIP program for this fiscal year. Thus, OPPAGA used Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20 for this analysis.

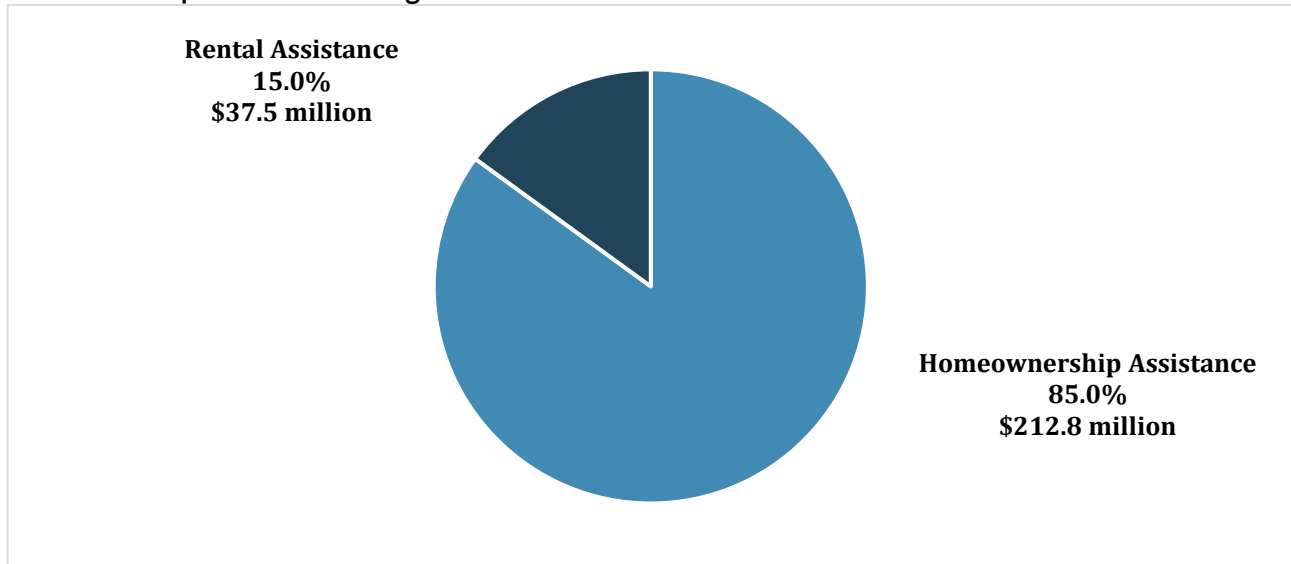
²⁵ Not all local governments receiving SHIP funds implement all 23 strategies. Additionally, the strategies local governments implement may differ from year to year.

²⁶ Section [420.9075\(5\)\(a\)](#), F.S., states that at least 65.0% of the funds made available in each county and eligible municipality from the local housing distribution must be reserved for home ownership for eligible persons. According to s. [420.9071\(11\)](#), F.S., an eligible person means one or more natural persons or a family determined by the county or eligible municipality to be of very low income, low income, or moderate income according to the income limits adjusted to family size published annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development based upon the annual gross income of the household.

²⁷ For Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20, local governments reported expenditures for implementing 22 of the 23 SHIP assistance strategies. During the period, no expenditures were reported for the emergency repair rental assistance strategy.

Exhibit 3

From Fiscal Years 2017-18 Through 2019-20, Local Governments Spent 85% of SHIP Program Funds on Homeownership Assistance Strategies



Source: OPPAGA analysis of SHIP data reported by local governments to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

SHIP funding assists local governments to support affordable housing through various strategies. The range of program activities includes funding for new construction, security and utility deposits, special needs housing, land acquisition, impact fees, demolition/reconstruction, and foreclosure prevention. Additionally, SHIP funds are required to serve very low, low, and moderate income families, with specific allocations for very low and low income households.

From Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20, total SHIP funding to support homeownership assistance strategies amounted to \$212.8 million, aiding 9,031 homeownership units (i.e., homes), thereby enhancing homeownership opportunities and rental housing for very low, low, and moderate income families through various rehabilitation and assistance programs.²⁸ (See Exhibit 4.) The most widely adopted homeownership assistance strategy was owner-occupied rehabilitation, reported by 91.1% of local governments, with expenditures totaling \$82.8 million to assist 3,149 homeownership units. Purchase assistance without rehabilitation was also significant, with 69.6% of local governments participating, spending \$41.2 million to assist 1,956 units. Additional assistance strategies included purchase assistance with rehabilitation, emergency repairs, disaster assistance, demolition/reconstruction, and new construction.

²⁸ Homeownership units include a new or existing home, existing units being rehabilitated without the creation of additional living space, or rehabilitated units that include the addition of new living space.

Exhibit 4

From Fiscal Years 2017-18 Through 2019-20, the Most Frequent Homeownership Assistance Strategies Reported by Local Governments Were Owner Occupied Rehabilitation and Purchase Assistance Without Rehabilitation

Homeownership Assistance Strategies	Number (Percentage) Local Governments ¹	Total Expenditures	Total Units
Owner Occupied Rehabilitation	102 (91%)	\$82,780,444	3,149
Purchase Assistance without Rehabilitation	78 (70%)	41,192,767	1,956
Purchase Assistance with Rehabilitation	53 (47%)	26,060,293	1,351
Emergency Repair	48 (43%)	7,438,053	664
Disaster Assistance	43 (38%)	7,235,137	846
Demolition/Reconstruction	39 (35%)	21,711,859	232
New Construction	24 (21%)	17,374,140	374
Foreclosure Prevention	15 (13%)	2,195,148	235
Special Needs	10 (9%)	3,854,976	125
Acquisition/Rehabilitation	7 (6%)	2,162,263	17
Impact Fees	7 (6%)	770,310	82
Total	112	\$212,775,392	9,031

¹ Number and percentage of local governments that reported expenditures for each SHIP assistance strategy at least once during Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of SHIP data reported by local governments to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

SHIP funding has also enabled local governments to support rental housing through various strategies. From Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20, total SHIP funding of \$37.5 million assisted 4,487 rental units, enhancing stability and quality for very low, low, and moderate income families. (See Exhibit 5.) The most widely adopted rental assistance strategies were disaster assistance reported by 24.0% of local governments with expenditures totaling \$4.0 million to assist 1,127 rental units. Additionally, 23.0% of local governments reported that rental assistance programs were the second most utilized strategy, with expenditures totaling \$3.8 million to assist 1,167 rental units. Other commonly reported rental assistance strategies included rehabilitation, rapid re-housing, and new construction of rental units.

Exhibit 5

From Fiscal Years 2016-17 Through 2019-20 the Most Frequent Rental Housing Assistance Strategies Reported by Local Governments Were Disaster Assistance and Rental Assistance

Rental Housing Assistance Strategies	Local Governments ¹	Total Expenditures	Total Units
Disaster Assistance	27 (24%)	\$3,969,651	1,127
Rental Assistance (Tenant)	26 (23%)	3,772,705	1,167
Rehabilitation	17 (15%)	12,037,052	534
Rapid Re-Housing	17 (15%)	2,018,280	514
New Construction	15 (13%)	12,854,680	313
Security and/or Utility Deposits	7 (6%)	1,244,108	587
Special Needs	7 (6%)	455,238	16
Land Acquisition	2 (2%)	653,358	7
Impact Fees	2 (2%)	262,771	163
Demolition/Reconstruction	2 (2%)	255,950	54
Foreclosure Prevention	2 (2%)	16,184	5
Total	112	\$37,539,976	4,487

¹ Number and percentage of local governments that reported expenditures for each SHIP assistance strategy at least once during Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2019-20. Of the 112 entities that reported affordable housing expenditures, only 61 reported adopting at least one rental assistance housing strategy.

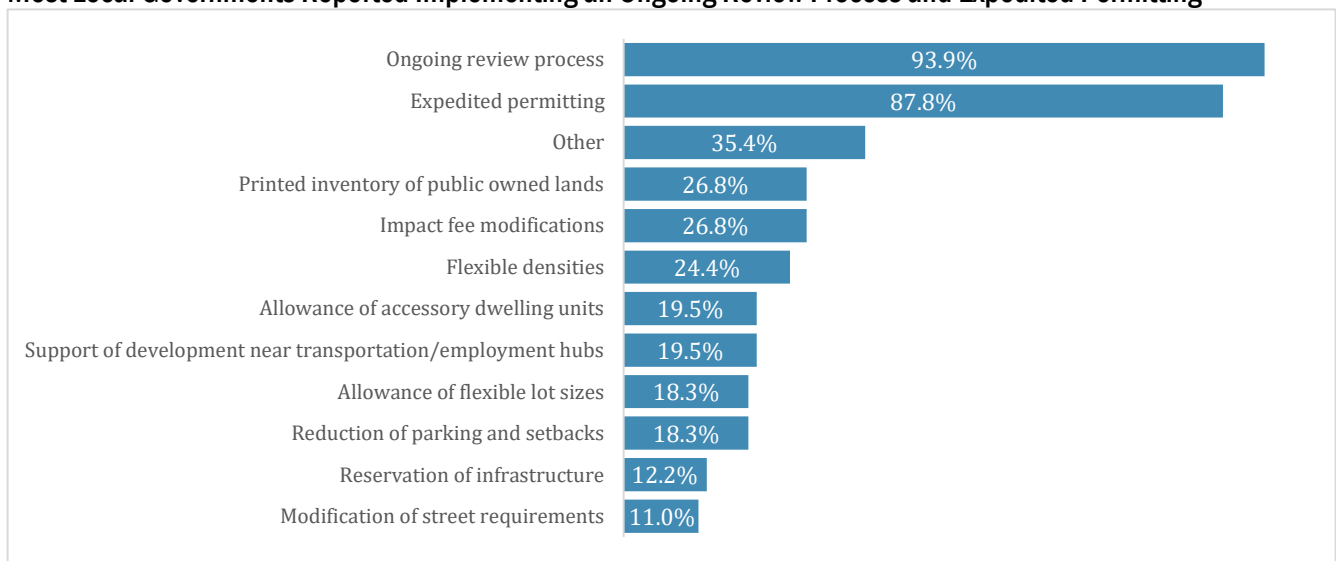
Source: OPPAGA analysis of SHIP data reported by local governments to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

SHIP program participants also implemented affordable housing incentive strategies, including impact fee modifications, public lands inventories, and flexible densities

OPPAGA analyzed data on 11 local housing incentive strategies reported by 82 SHIP program participants (i.e., counties and municipalities) to FHFC for Fiscal Year 2020-21.²⁹ (See Appendix B for a list of the 11 incentive strategies.) As required by law, most SHIP program participants reported adopting local housing incentive strategies that include ensuring that expedited permitting for affordable housing projects and an ongoing review process are in place for local policies, ordinances, and plan provisions. For instance, most local governments implemented ongoing review processes of local policies, ordinances, and plan provisions (93.9%) and expedited permitting (87.8%) as incentive strategies. Other commonly reported incentive strategies included printed inventory of public lands (26.8%), impact fee modifications (26.8%), and flexible densities (24.4%).³⁰ (See Exhibit 6.)

Exhibit 6

Most Local Governments Reported Implementing an Ongoing Review Process and Expedited Permitting



Source: OPPAGA analysis of FHFC data from local housing assistance plans.

Most survey respondents reported encouraging mixed-income projects and using expedited permitting and flexible zoning to support affordable housing

OPPAGA surveyed county administrators in all 67 counties and city managers in 408 municipalities to identify the affordable housing policies that local governments have implemented, policies that counties and municipalities consider the most effective, and best practices the local governments have identified for implementing those policies.^{31, 32}

²⁹ The 11 local housing incentive strategies categories are allowance of accessory dwelling units, allowance of flexible lot sizes, flexible densities, expedited permitting, impact fee modifications, ongoing review process, modification of street requirements, printed inventory of public owned lands, reduction of parking and setbacks, reservation of infrastructure, and support of development near transportation and employment hubs; localities listed additional strategies that did not fall into these categories as “other.”

³⁰ SHIP program participants reported local housing incentive strategies that did not fall into a specific category as “other”, which included affordable housing definitions and processes, flexible development standards, and development fees incentives.

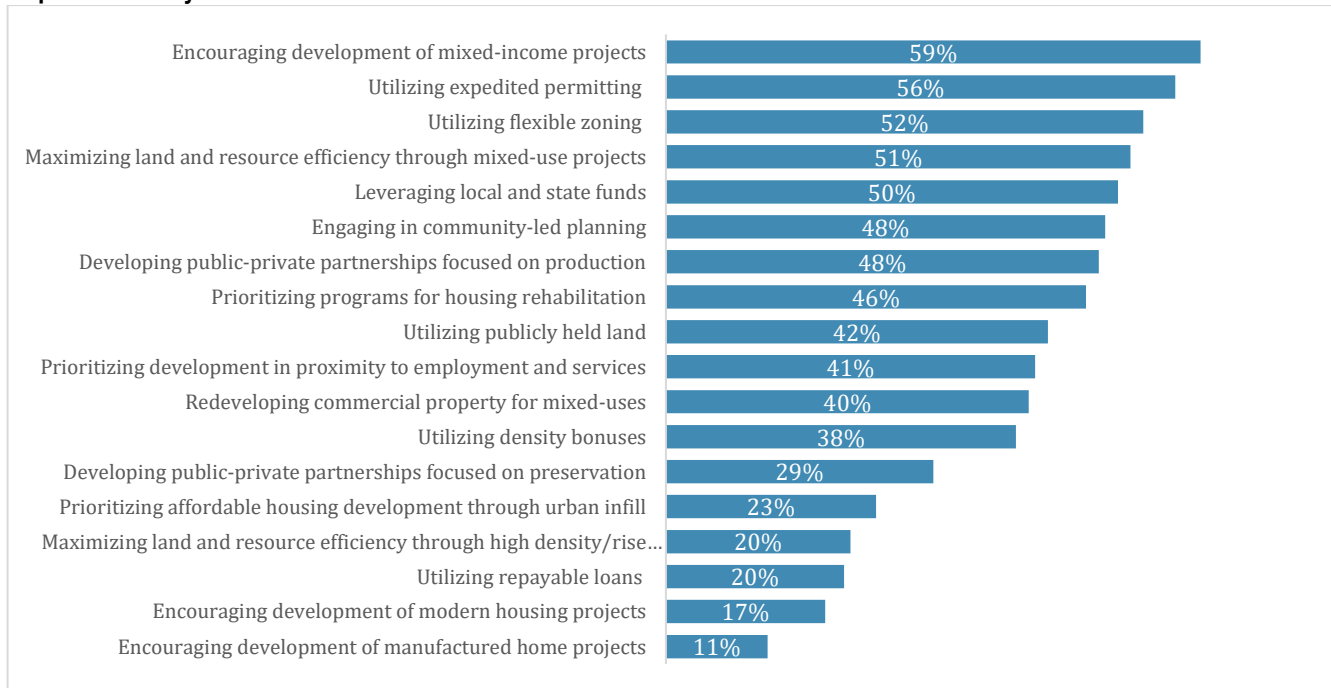
³¹ There are 411 municipalities in Florida; OPPAGA was able to obtain accurate contact information for 408.

³² Forty-four counties responded to at least one survey question, a response rate of 66%; 170 municipalities responded to at least one survey question, a response rate of 42%.

OPPAGA’s survey asked respondents about implementation of 18 affordable housing policies.^{33,34} (See Appendix C for a list of the 18 policies.) On average, counties reported implementing 9 policies, while municipalities reported implementing 6 policies. The largest percentage of survey respondents reported encouraging the development of mixed-income housing projects (59%). (See Exhibit 7.) Mixed-income housing developments include housing units with differing levels of affordability. Fifty-six percent of respondents reported utilizing expedited permitting, and 52% reported implementing flexible zoning. Expedited permitting shortens the approval process for affordable housing projects by reducing the time needed to obtain necessary permits and inspections. In addition, flexible zoning eases zoning restrictions, which could allow mixed residential/commercial zoning or single-family homeowners to add accessory dwelling units (ADUs).³⁵

Exhibit 7

Encouraging Development of Mixed-Income Projects Was the Most Common Affordable Housing Policy Implemented by Local Governments



Source: OPPAGA survey of local governments.

Counties and municipalities differed in the types of affordable housing policies implemented. Of the 41 counties that responded to a question about the affordable housing policies implemented, 39 reported leveraging local and state funds (e.g., SHIP) to achieve the maximum federal, local, and private commitment of funds, 37 reported utilizing expedited permitting for affordable housing projects, and 30 reported prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation. For the 157 municipalities that responded to the same question, 56 reported encouraging development of mixed-income projects, 53 reported maximizing land and resource efficiency through mixed-use projects, and 48 reported utilizing flexible zoning, such as zoning for ADUs.

³³ Seventeen of the 18 affordable housing policies that OPPAGA used in its survey are outlined in s. [420.0003\(2\)](#), F.S. One, expedited permitting, is found in s. [420.9076\(4\)\(a\)](#), F.S.

³⁴ When asked on OPPAGA’s survey about current implementation of the 18 affordable housing policies, 50 municipalities reported not currently implementing any affordable housing policies and 5 reported currently implementing other types of affordable housing policies not among the 18, such as the Live Local Act.

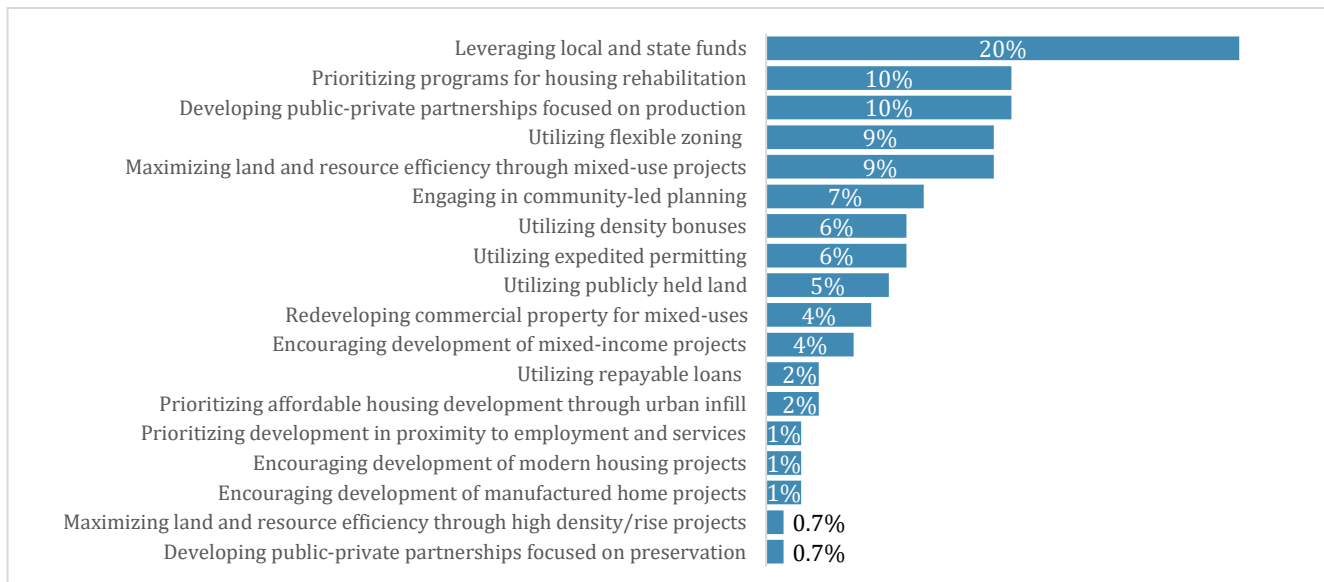
³⁵ ADUs are secondary residential units typically on a single-family lot. An ADU can be an apartment within the primary residence or an attached or freestanding home on the same lot as the primary residence.

Affordable housing policies identified as most effective varied by type of government and population size

OPPAGA survey respondents varied considerably by local government type and population size in response to questions regarding which affordable housing policies were most effective. Counties and municipalities most frequently reported (20%) that leveraging state funds to achieve the maximum federal, local, and private commitment of funds was the most effective affordable housing policy. (See Exhibit 8.) Respondents also reported that prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation (10%), developing public-private partnerships focused on housing production (10%), and maximizing land and resource efficiency through mixed-use projects (9%) were effective. Notably, although encouraging the development of mixed-income housing projects was the most frequently implemented policy across all respondents, only 4% of local governments cited this policy as the most effective in terms of number of households assisted or number of affordable housing units produced.

Exhibit 8

Leveraging Local and State Funds Was the Most Effective Affordable Housing Policy Reported by Local Governments



Source: OPPAGA survey of local governments.

Counties reported that leveraging local and state funds to achieve maximum funding commitments from other sources was the most effective affordable housing policy

Of the 41 counties that reported implementing at least one affordable housing policy, 40 reported an affordable housing policy that was the most effective.³⁶ Across all county respondents, the most commonly reported effective affordable housing policies were

- leveraging local and state funds (e.g., SHIP) to achieve the maximum federal, local, and private commitment of funds (24);

³⁶ Of the 40 county respondents that provided information on the most effective affordable housing policy, 7 were large counties, 21 were medium, and 12 were small counties. To characterize county size, OPPAGA used the population ranges found in the 2023 Shimberg Center Annual Report: small (>100,000 residents), medium (100,000 - 824,999 residents), and large (< 825,000 residents).

- prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation (4);
- developing public-private partnerships focused on production of affordable housing (4); and
- utilizing expedited permitting for affordable housing projects (2).

Counties identified several benefits associated with each of these policies. For instance, counties that identified leveraging local and state funds and those that identified utilizing expedited permitting for affordable housing projects most often reported that these policies increased the number of affordable housing units and number of households assisted. Counties that identified prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation most often reported that the policy increased the number of households assisted. In addition, counties that identified public-private partnerships focused on producing affordable housing reported that the policy’s benefits were relatively evenly divided between increases in the number of affordable housing units, number of households assisted, and community engagement. (See Exhibit 9.)

Exhibit 9

Counties Reported Several Benefits Associated With the Affordable Housing Policies Deemed Most Effective

Policy	Increased Affordable Housing Units	Increased Households Assisted	Generated Additional Funding	Increased Engagement
Leveraging local and state funds to achieve the maximum federal, local, and private commitment of funds	15	15	6	8
Prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation	3	4	1	0
Developing public-private partnerships focused on production of affordable housing	4	4	3	4
Utilizing expedited permitting for affordable housing projects	1	1	0	0

Source: OPPAGA survey of local governments.

In terms of population size, 10 of 12 small counties, 10 of 21 medium counties, and 4 of 7 large counties responding to this survey question reported that leveraging local and state funds was the most effective affordable housing policy. Other affordable housing policies that two or more medium-sized counties identified as most effective were prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation (4) and developing public-private partnerships focused on production of affordable housing (2). In addition, two large-sized counties cited developing public-private partnerships focused on producing affordable housing as the most effective policy.

Municipalities reported that maximizing land and resource efficiency through mixed-use projects and utilizing flexible zoning were the most effective affordable housing policies

Of the 102 municipalities that reported implementing at least one affordable housing policy, 98 reported an affordable housing policy that was the most effective.³⁷ Across all municipal respondents, the most commonly reported effective affordable housing policies were

- maximizing land and resource efficiency through mixed-use projects (12);
- utilizing flexible zoning (12);

³⁷ Of the 98 municipal respondents that provided information on the most effective affordable housing policy, 25 were large-sized municipalities, 47 were medium-sized municipalities, and 26 were small-sized municipalities.

- developing public-private partnerships focused on production of affordable housing (10); and
- prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation (10).

Municipalities reported several benefits associated with each policy. For example, municipalities that identified maximizing land and resource efficiency through mixed-use projects most often reported that the policy increased community and stakeholder engagement in local housing programs. Municipalities that identified utilizing flexible zoning and those that identified developing public-private partnerships most often reported that these policies increased the number of affordable housing units. Municipalities that identified prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation most often reported that the policy increased the number of households assisted. (See Exhibit 10.)

Exhibit 10

Municipalities Reported Several Benefits Associated With the Affordable Housing Policies Deemed Most Effective

Policy	Increased Affordable Housing Units	Increased Households Assisted	Generated Additional Funding	Increased Engagement
Maximizing land and resource efficiency through mixed-use projects	5	2	1	7
Utilizing flexible zoning	8	5	1	1
Developing public-private partnerships focused on production of affordable housing	9	5	2	2
Prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation	4	8	2	4

Source: OPPAGA survey of local governments.

The affordable housing policies identified as most effective varied by the municipality’s population size. Large-sized municipalities most frequently identified developing public-private partnerships focused on production of affordable housing and prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation (each identified by 6 municipalities) as the most effective affordable housing policies.³⁸ Medium-sized municipalities most frequently identified maximizing land and resource efficiency through mixed-use projects (9) as the most effective affordable housing policy. Small-sized municipalities most frequently identified utilizing flexible zoning and engaging in community-led planning (each identified by 4 municipalities) as the most effective affordable housing policies.

OPPAGA identified several best practices for implementing affordable housing

OPPAGA surveyed local governments and reviewed literature from affordable housing organizations, research institutes, and academic publications to identify best practices for implementing affordable housing policies. In addition, OPPAGA reviewed documents published by several organizations that offer best practices for addressing affordable housing. These organizations include the Florida Housing Coalition, Florida Housing Finance Corporation, Affordable Housing Institute, and Urban Land Institute.

Using survey and literature review results, OPPAGA identified several examples of best practices related to each of the five most frequently reported affordable housing policies. (See Exhibit 11.) A common best practice for implementing flexible zoning is to allow the use of accessory dwelling units. Flexible zoning is a housing policy that eases zoning restrictions, which could allow mixed

³⁸ In terms of size, small municipalities are those with fewer than 5,000 residents, medium municipalities are those with 5,000 - 49,999 residents, and large municipalities are those with 50,000 or more residents.

residential/commercial zoning or single-family homeowners to add an ADU such as an apartment within the primary residence or an attached or freestanding home on the same lot as the primary residence.

Another common best practice reported by local governments is using public land or property for affordable housing initiatives. For example, one municipality donated public property for affordable housing and another transferred city-owned vacant, blighted properties to not-for-profit affordable housing developers as an incentive to construct affordable housing in such areas.³⁹ Counties and municipalities can facilitate a community land trust to use public land or property. According to the Florida Housing Coalition's Community Land Trust Best Practices report, when establishing a community land trust, it is a best practice to maintain a 501(c)3 status and state in the articles of incorporation that the purpose is to acquire land to be held in perpetuity for providing affordable housing.⁴⁰

³⁹ According to s. [163.340\(8\)](#), *F.S.*, blighted areas include areas with (1) a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures; (2) conditions that endanger life or property or lead to economic distress; and (3) factors such as unsanitary or unsafe conditions, inadequate and outdated building density pattern, and higher incidence of crime than in the remainder of the county or municipality.

⁴⁰ Florida Housing Coalition, *A Manual for Establishing, Sustaining, and Scaling Community Land Trust Operations in Florida*. 2021. <https://flhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/8-30-FL-CLT-Best-Practices-FINAL.pdf>

Exhibit 11

Best Practices Vary by the Affordable Housing Policies Identified by Local Governments

Survey Respondents' Most Effective Affordable Housing Policies ¹	Examples of Best Practices ²
Maximizing land and resource efficiency through mixed-use projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate essential services with affordable housing • Rezone underdeveloped parcels • Maintain high residential density in mixed-use projects or provide ample residential space • Centralize advertising and aids with single ownership • Establish business opening and closing times to capitalize on use throughout the day
Utilizing flexible zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for use of ADUs • Reduce minimum lot size requirements • Use mixed residential and commercial zoning to encourage high housing density • Allow multifamily zoning without requiring it to encourage high housing density
Developing public-private partnerships focused on production of affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate affordable housing staff to minimize project delays • Create local loan programs that increase lending to developers for the production of affordable housing units • Donate or use public land for affordable housing • Provide utility credits to private developers to build affordable housing • Require the development company to have a professional team that includes an architect, an engineer, a general contractor, a sales agent, and a facilities management organization
Prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize structural, large cost items (e.g., roof) • Incorporate hazard mitigation and energy retrofits into rehabilitation programs • Use outreach to inform the community of services available • Conduct needs assessments • Focus on assisting low income and special needs households • Incorporate mitigation features into SHIP strategies to strengthen homes in the event of a disaster
Leveraging local and state funds to achieve the maximum federal, local, and private commitment of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide gap funding • Provide local government matching funds for developers applying for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program • Provide down payment assistance, e.g., for first-time home buyers • Utilize funding to provide homeless stabilization services • Combine funding sources to replace irreparable housing • Use funding to complete disaster relief projects • Utilize partnership opportunities with local and state organizations to leverage affordable housing funds • Create community land trusts and donate land to provide affordable housing opportunities • Create incentives through tax credits for developers • Expand the scope of income levels served to increase funding opportunities • Advertise SHIP funding availability at least once a year • Track funds leveraged with SHIP moneys

¹ OPPAGA asked survey respondents to identify the local government's most effective affordable housing policy. These five policies were most frequently identified by respondents as the most effective.

² Best practices for each policy include those practices identified by survey respondents and OPPAGA's literature review.

Source: OPPAGA survey of local governments.

Many local governments reported engaging in interlocal cooperation to support affordable housing

OPPAGA's survey asked local governments about the use of interlocal cooperation to support affordable housing policies. Interlocal cooperation may occur through formal agreements (e.g., memorandums of understanding, contracts, and interlocal agreements) or informal arrangements (e.g. joint initiatives and shared programs). Such cooperation may occur between counties, between municipalities, or between both counties and municipalities. Overall, 44% of survey respondents

reported cooperating with other local governments to support affordable housing policies.⁴¹ Of those, 7% of respondents reported engaging in both formal and informal interlocal cooperation. A larger portion of counties than municipalities reported use of interlocal cooperation—61% of counties (25 of 41) reported using interlocal agreements compared to 39% of municipalities (60 of 152). The most common activities conducted through interlocal cooperation cited by local governments via OPPAGA’s survey were promoting and administering affordable housing programs and services.

Sixty percent of survey respondents reported that interlocal cooperation was effective for supporting affordable housing.⁴² Most frequently, respondents reported that interlocal cooperation resulted in more effective use of funds and increased effective administration and communication regarding affordable housing projects. However, 21% of respondents reported that there were factors that hindered interlocal cooperation. Examples of such factors included the cost of land and construction materials, local opposition to development, and lack of funding.

⁴¹ While 61% of municipalities reported either not cooperating with other local governments for affordable housing (69) or being unsure if the municipality cooperated with other local governments for affordable housing (23), 39% of counties reported either not cooperating with other local governments for affordable housing (13) or being unsure if the county cooperated with other local governments for affordable housing (3).

⁴² A total of 84 respondents provided information about the effectiveness of interlocal cooperation. Of these respondents, 25 were county respondents and 59 were municipal respondents. Twenty-one county respondents and 29 municipal respondents reported that interlocal cooperation had been effective.

APPENDIX A

State Housing Initiatives Partnership Affordable Housing Assistance Strategies

Local governments (i.e., counties and municipalities) receiving State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funds annually report the number of units and average cost of producing units associated with each of the 23 assistance strategies to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. Some assistance strategies are similar for both homeownership and rental. (See Exhibit A-1.)

Exhibit A-1

SHIP Affordable Housing Assistance Strategies

Assistance Strategy	Rental or Homeownership	Description – SHIP Funding Activities
Purchase Assistance with Rehabilitation	Homeownership	Downpayment assistance and rehabilitation
Purchase Assistance without Rehabilitation	Homeownership	Used for new or existing homes, but no rehab paid with SHIP
Owner Occupied Rehabilitation	Homeownership	General rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes
Demolition/Reconstruction	Homeownership and Rental	Funding for homes that are beyond reasonable repair
Disaster Assistance	Homeownership and Rental	Funding for immediate activities during/after a disaster or emergency; rental assistance may be provided
Emergency Repair	Homeownership and Rental	Repairs for a specific list of items such as windows, roofing, etc. that cannot wait for more major rehabilitation
Foreclosure Prevention	Homeownership and Rental	Mortgage assistance for three to six months; including for eligible sponsors/landlords for rental
Impact Fees	Homeownership and Rental	Payment of fees that are required to be paid prior to purchase or for eligible rental units
Acquisition/Rehabilitation	Homeownership	Used if the local government is purchasing homes for rehabilitation and sale within the expenditure period
New Construction	Homeownership and Rental	Funding to a sponsor/developer who will build homes for resale to eligible buyers or renters
Special Needs	Homeownership and Rental	Funding for activities for individuals with special needs such as barrier removal
Rental Assistance (Tenant)	Rental	Eviction prevention for qualifying households
Land Acquisition	Rental	Purchase land for units to be developed for eligible households
Rapid Re-Housing	Rental	Rental subsidy for qualifying households
Security and/or Utility Deposits	Rental	Used in conjunction with rental assistance (tenant) and rapid re-housing
Rehabilitation	Rental	Used to award funds to a developer/landlord to repair rental units; can be combined with new construction (rental)

Source: Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

APPENDIX B

State Housing Initiatives Partnership Affordable Housing Incentive Strategies

OPPAGA analyzed 11 local housing incentive strategies reported by 82 State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program participants (i.e., counties and municipalities) in local housing assistance plans for Fiscal Year 2020-21.⁴³ According to s. [420.9071\(18\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, “local housing incentive strategies” are local regulatory reforms or incentive programs to encourage or facilitate affordable housing production. Each county or eligible municipality participating in SHIP must submit a local housing assistance plan that includes such strategies. (See Exhibit B-1.)

Exhibit B-1 Affordable Housing Incentive Strategies

Incentive Strategy	Description
Expedited Process of Development Approvals	The processing of approvals of development orders or permits for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects.
Flexibility in Density	A jurisdiction may increase the maximum units allowable if a builder develops affordable housing units in exchange.
Fee waivers for the Development or Construction of Affordable Housing	Local governments can provide an exception or waiver for an impact fee for the development or construction of housing that is affordable. If a local government does so, it is not required to use any revenues to offset the impact. By modifying fee requirements for affordable housing construction, the overall cost of the development can be reduced, and the savings can be passed on in the form of lower rents or lower sales prices.
Reservation of Infrastructure Capacity	The reservation of infrastructure capacity is based upon local requirements in largely urban areas. These larger areas require future developments to make a reservation to guarantee the new development will meet concurrency requirements by meeting designated levels of service for certain types of infrastructure. Reservation is the act of setting aside a portion of available infrastructure capacity necessary to accommodate valid intermediate or final development orders.
Accessory Dwelling Units	Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are secondary residential units typically on single-family lots that are independent of the primary dwelling unit. ADUs are a way to increase the number of housing units in areas that have primarily single-family homes. Local government can ease regulatory barriers to ADU development and should strive to amend land development codes to encourage the construction of these units.
Modification of Street Requirements	Land use regulations typically list a number of requirements related to streets: driveway and walkway requirements, alleyways, curb allowances, drainage requirements, utility easements, and parking on both sides of the street. Modifications to these requirements can reduce development costs, allow more land to be developed as housing, free up land for lots, and allow for more flexible design.
Ongoing Regulatory Review Process	The establishment of a process that requires local governments to consider how proposed governmental actions may affect the cost of housing development. This level of review may lead governmental bodies to reconsider certain actions that may increase the cost of development and in turn, increase the price of housing.
Surplus Lands Inventory	Discounted or donated land can significantly reduce the cost of developing affordable housing. Available land that is suitable for affordable housing development is a primary concern for housing providers. A land bank is a tool that can be used to implement the surplus land statute.

⁴³ SHIP program participants reported local housing incentive strategies that did not fall into a specific category into an “other” category, which included affordable housing definitions and processes, flexible development standards, and development fees incentives.

Incentive Strategy	Description
Transportation Hubs and Transit-Oriented Development	Flexible land use requirements that support development near transportation hubs and major employment centers can help low to moderate income residents reduce their transportation costs.
Flexible Lot Considerations	Flexible lot configurations can be a creative way to encourage the development of affordable housing units, especially for parcels that may be unique in shape and size. A flexible lot configuration can create a number of smaller housing units on a single lot.
Reduction of Parking and Setback Requirements	The modification of parking and setback requirements can resolve issues an affordable housing development might have in design and siting. Flexibility in these requirements can help lower development costs and ensure that more of the buildable land is available for housing development. While the intent of setbacks is to create consistency in lot composition and to preserve sight lines, utility easements, or future rights of way, there are many cases when the modification of these requirements can result in greater land area for the development.

Source: Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

APPENDIX C

Florida Statutes Outline Policies for Supporting Affordable Housing

OPPAGA reviewed ss. [420.0003\(2\)](#) and [420.9076\(4\)\(a\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, and identified 18 affordable housing policies and strategies. (See Exhibit C-1.) OPPAGA then asked municipal and county survey respondents about implementation of these policies.

Exhibit C-1

Affordable Housing Policies Used in OPPAGA's Survey

Affordable Housing Policy
Utilizing repayable loans (rather than grant programs)
Utilizing publicly held land
Engaging in community-led planning
Prioritizing affordable housing development through urban infill
Utilizing flexible zoning
Redeveloping commercial property for mixed-uses, including affordable housing
Maximizing land and resource efficiency through <u>high density/high rise</u> projects
Maximizing land and resource efficiency through <u>mixed-use</u> projects
Developing mixed-income projects
Developing manufactured home projects
Developing modern housing projects (e.g., tiny home projects, 3D-printed home projects)
Prioritizing affordable housing development in proximity to employment and services
Developing public-private partnerships focused on <u>production</u> of affordable housing
Developing public-private partnerships focused on <u>preservation</u> of affordable housing
Utilizing expedited permitting for affordable housing projects
Prioritizing programs for housing rehabilitation
Utilizing density bonuses
Leveraging state funds to achieve the maximum federal, local, and private commitment of funds

Source: Sections [420.0003\(2\)](#) and [420.9076\(4\)](#), *Florida Statutes*.



OPPAGA

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Project supervised by Alex Regalado (850/717-0506)
Project conducted by Will Bullen, Sean Millard, Kyle Rose, and Katherine Scheuch
Kara Collins-Gomez, Coordinator