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## Florida Puts State Housing Trust Fund Back on Track

by Michael Anderson // 2014, Summer



Florida housing advocates won an impressive victory with \$167,660,000 committed to the William E. Sadowski Act housing programs for FY2014-2015: the State Housing Initiatives Partnership program (SHIP) and the State Apartment Incentive Loan program (SAIL)—Florida’s housing trust fund! This is the highest level of funding since FY2007-2008.

The Florida Sadowski Fund was created in 1992 with an increase in the documentary stamp tax dedicated to the Fund. The funds are divided providing 70% to all 67 counties and entitlement cities through the SHIP program and 30% directly to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation for the SAIL program and other housing programs. However, the funds are appropriated each year through the budget process and have been shifted to other expenditures for the last several years. Funds are intended to be used for rehabilitation/renovation of existing homes, downpayment and closing cost assistance, rehabilitation, and activities to provide safe affordable homes for seniors, persons with disabilities, and those with the lowest incomes.

The Florida Housing Coalition’s 2014 *Home Matters Report* was a key advocacy tool during the legislative session. Described on the Advocacy SkillShare portion of the [Housing Trust Fund Project’s website](#), the report provides clear explanations and graphics on economic impact and leverage. The report also highlights the increased revenue for state and local governments generated from investing in affordable housing. The report also highlighted the impressive track record of the Sadowski Fund. Full appropriation of the revenues generated for the Sadowski Fund could have enabled \$291+ million to be available to support needed housing, which the Florida Housing Coalition estimates would have created 27,241 jobs and \$3.43 billion in positive economic impact throughout Florida.

The Florida Housing Coalition membership, including the Florida Nonprofit Housing Advocates Network, and the Sadowski Coalition partners carried out an amazing collaborative job of reaching out to legislators. *“I believe what made the most positive difference this year was that housing advocates*

met with their legislators locally to tell them how important housing was to their community. That opened legislators' hearts and minds to the truth about how wonderful our state and local housing trust fund programs are for helping Florida's most vulnerable populations, leveraging funds, creating jobs, and boosting the economy,"said Jaimie Ross, President of the Florida Housing Coalition and Affordable Housing Director of 1000 Friends of Florida. The education with legislators about the benefits of investing in affordable homes made a difference this legislative session and will into the future.

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