

CAPITAL AREA

Justice Ministry

Affordable Housing

Research Update: Understanding the Problem

as of February 4, 2022

To understand our local problem of affordable housing, CAJM leaders have read city, county and state reports on the status and plans for affordable housing. **We met with the Florida Housing Coalition, the Big Bend Homeless Coalition, the City of Tallahassee's Housing Division, the Center for Community Change, and the Bond Neighborhood Association president** through February 4th. Below is a summary of what we know so far.

Income Determines What is Affordable

- ❖ 26.4% of Tallahassee City residents, and 18% of Leon County residents live below the poverty line (2019).¹ Another 30% of our population in Leon County, while above the poverty line, are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE), or "working poor".² This means that **almost half of our county's residents do not have sufficient income to cover the bare-minimum costs of basic necessities** (housing, childcare, food, transportation, healthcare, a basic smartphone plan, and taxes).
- ❖ Some zip codes in Tallahassee fare much worse. In 2019, **81% of the families in the 32304 zip code lived below ALICE, and 65% of the families in the 32310 zip code.**³

Affordable Housing Availability in our Area

- ❖ Most low-income families rent rather than own.⁴ Over **34,774 low-income families spend more than 1/3 of their income on housing**⁴. This leaves little in the family budget for other expenses. Most earn low wages who need rentals below \$700/month.^{5,6}
- ❖ The local "fair market rent" for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$1024 per month. To afford this rent, without paying more than 1/3 of their income, **a single mom earning the local minimum wage of \$8.65 per hour would need to work 93 hours per week** – or she would need to earn \$20 per hour working 40 hours per week.⁷
- ❖ **More than 13-thousand families of 4 making less than \$38,000 annually are still in need of affordable rentals.**
- ❖ City and county affordable housing programs have accomplished little to alleviate the shortage. Approximately 30 new affordable rentals are expected to have been constructed between 2015 and 2024.¹ The Orange Avenue Complex and Magnolia Oaks projects are anticipated to produce about 300 new mixed-income apartments, not all of which will be affordable for low-income households.

Who we're meeting next to uncover more about the problem:

The county's housing division ♦ Tallahassee Lenders Consortium which serves as the city and county Community Land Trust ♦ the city's Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

¹

¹ US Census. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/leoncountyflorida,tallahassee-cityflorida/PST045221>

² United Way of Big Bend. ALICE in Florida: A Financial Hardship Study. 2020, based on 2018 data

³ United Way of Big Bend. ALICE in Florida, <https://www.unitedforalice.org/county-profiles/florida>

⁴ Shimberg Center, Leon County Data, 2020 estimate

⁵ City of Tallahassee Affordable Housing Dashboard

⁶ City of Tallahassee Consolidated plan, pp 47, 50

⁷ Florida | National Low Income Housing Coalition 2021 "Out of Reach" study,. <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/florida>