

## [University of Florida News](#)

### \$1 million MacArthur grant will help Florida preserve affordable housing

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GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Just as Florida's affordable housing properties are reaching old age, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has provided a lifeline. The foundation awarded a [\\$1 million grant to the Florida Partnership](#), which includes the University of Florida Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, the Florida Housing Finance Corporation and the Florida Housing Coalition, to preserve properties that provide housing for extremely low-income households and people with special needs.

"Florida's emphasis on building the capacity of local and regional nonprofits to preserve affordable rental housing will help the state particularly meet the housing needs of low-wage workers and seniors," said MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton. The Florida Partnership grant was one of 12 the foundation awarded to cities and states throughout the country for a total of \$32.5 million in new funding for innovative projects to preserve more than 70,000 affordable rental homes nationwide, including 5,000 in Florida.

"Florida's selection in this highly competitive process marks the state as an emerging leader in the field of affordable rental housing preservation," said William J. O'Dell, manager of the Shimberg Center's Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse. O'Dell and UF researcher Anne Ray are leading the center's research on the MacArthur grant.

"We are honored to work with our partners, the Florida Housing Finance Corporation and the Florida Housing Coalition. This project marks the latest step in a longstanding partnership among our agencies," said O'Dell.

With the state's rapid growth and available land, Florida's affordable housing focus has been historically on new construction, yet most of these newer units have rents that are not affordable to the lowest income families. The MacArthur grant will allow the Florida Partnership to meet the needs of low-wage workers and low-income seniors by helping mission-driven organizations to preserve the subsidized rental properties that serve those most in need.

The Florida Housing Coalition will receive \$475,000 to educate nonprofits and local governments about preservation strategies and how to access funding, and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation will receive \$25,000 to support peer networking activities for nonprofit and for-profit developers in support of rehabilitating aging privately owned properties with expiring subsidies.

For its part, the Shimberg Center will receive \$500,000 of the grant to develop enhanced data tools to help the state, nonprofits and local governments make far-sighted decisions about the communities and properties most in need of affordable housing preservation.

"We are excited about this opportunity to connect University of Florida to the needs of

Florida's communities. Our estimates show that over 900,000 low-income households in Florida rent their housing; for their sake, preservation of the state's existing affordable rental housing is crucial," said Ray.

UF's research and data collection will address which types of tenants are most at risk of losing their housing, how do rents change at properties not preserved as affordable housing, where the best locations are for affordable housing preservation and how much affordable rental housing is provided by the private market.

All of the center's data will be available to the public on the Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse Web site at <http://flhousingdata.shimberg.ufl.edu/>.

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## Credits

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