



## **State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP)**

### **Technical Bulletin**

#### **2015-01**

#### **NOFA Advertisements**

**All local governments receiving annual allocations of SHIP funds are required to advertise a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). The requirement is set forth in the SHIP statute as such:**

420.9075 (4) (b) The county or eligible municipality or its administrative representative shall advertise the notice of funding availability in a newspaper of general circulation and periodicals serving ethnic and diverse neighborhoods, at least 30 days before the beginning of the application period. If no funding is available due to a waiting list, no notice of funding availability is required.

**The SHIP program rule provides additional detail related to the required elements of a NOFA:**

67-37.005 (6) Each local housing assistance plan shall also include a statement, and evidence thereof, that the county or eligible municipality:

- (a) Has a plan to advertise a notice of funding availability of the housing assistance plan at least 30 days before the beginning of the application period in a newspaper of general circulation and periodicals serving ethnic and diverse neighborhoods unless a waiting list of applicants exists. The advertisement shall:
  1. Identify the amount of the distribution projected to be received from the state for the fiscal year;
  2. List the beginning and end date of the application period;
  3. Provide the name of the local plan contact person and other pertinent information including where applicants may apply for assistance.
- (b) Include other such information that the local governments deem necessary such as:
  1. An estimated amount of SHIP local housing distribution per strategy;
  2. Income set asides for each strategy along with applicable income limits;
  3. A description of the selection criteria for each strategy; or
  4. The maximum housing value limitation for each strategy.

Through the review process, Florida Housing has identified instances in which the NOFA requirement was not properly met. Issues include: failure to publish a NOFA; failure to state the dates of the application period; failure to allow for the 30 day notice to run prior to accepting applications; or failure to include all required elements outlined in 67-37.005 (6) (a) of the rule.

#### **NOFA Tips:**

1. Advertise as soon as Florida Housing distributes an allocation breakdown for the given fiscal year.
2. Set an application period that a) does not start until 30 days after the advertisement is published and b) has a clearly defined opening and closing date (application period).
3. Clearly identify the name of the contact and location where applications can be obtained and submitted. Make sure to identify web addresses if the applications can be accessed online.
4. Review the list of items recommended in 67-37.005 (6) (b) above to create an ad that provides a good overview to the public of what is available. Understanding that these types of advertisements can be expensive, links to additional information on your website where the LHAP and other information is located may be a good compliment to this information.
5. Although you are not required to advertise if you have a waiting list that will likely use all of the allocated funds, it may be prudent to publish a NOFA with a statement to the fact that there is a waiting list and whether you will accept applications to the waiting list or that you will advertise when and if funds become available.
6. If you change the LHAP strategies or criteria that were specifically included in the NOFA, a re-advertisement to notice the changes may be necessary.