



## CONSENSUS CENTER

*“Facilitating Solutions, Supporting Collaborative Actions”*

Florida State University  
Morgan Building, Suite 236  
2035 E. Paul Dirac Drive  
Tallahassee, FL 32312  
850-644-6320  
<http://consensus.fsu.edu>

### MONROE COUNTY WORKFORCE HOUSING ASSESSMENT AUGUST 2014

On August 20, 2014 the Monroe County Commission approved an effort, to be conducted by the FCRC Consensus Center at Florida State University (Consensus Center), to test the waters and assess whether a stakeholder consensus building effort should be convened to address the challenging complex issues surrounding affordable workforce housing in the Florida Keys.

**The affordable workforce housing crisis in the Florida Keys identified by the Monroe County Commission is real.** The “2013 Rental Market Study: Affordable Housing Needs” <http://bit.ly/1pbwJvN>, shows that there are 13,471 households in Monroe County. 44% of these are cost burdened households with 2,538 1-2 person households and 1,349 3-4 person households at or below 60% Area Median Income (AMI). This 44.4% rate represents the highest rate of any of the 33 small Florida counties and is equal only to that of Miami-Dade County among all 67 counties.

**A Broad-based Stakeholder Approach.** As the 2005 Harvard report, “Strengthening the Workforce and Communities through Housing Solutions” suggests, solutions to the workforce housing challenge require a broad-based, proactive approach.<sup>1</sup> The proposed assessment will be the first phase of a process and will engage a broad range of public, private and non profit stakeholders to clarify substantive issues involved, options to consider, information needed and process and coordination issues. It will result in a report to the County Commission summarizing the responses and recommend next steps.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://bit.ly/1kcpnfm>, “By the time a workforce housing affordability problem begins to affect the bottom line, the forces that contribute to high housing costs have long been in place and are difficult to reverse. For the housing and business communities to forestall such an outcome, they must establish a working relationship characterized by respect, trust, and an awareness of each other’s interests. They must have access to information about the causes of the affordability problem and data that demonstrate its effects.”

**The Consensus Center’s Workforce Housing “Situation Assessment”** will use interviews, meetings and review of data and documents to assess stakeholder perspectives on the County’s workforce housing challenges and test interest in participating in a consensus building process. Based on this stakeholder input, the assessment report will recommend the scope of the effort and summarize the concerns, issues, and interests that ought to be considered. The assessment will seek answers to the following questions:

1. What are the range of affordable workforce housing and related issues from the perspectives of County, City, State and Federal housing and tourist development leaders, the business and tourist community and the non-profit community and civic organizations and residents? What are the linkages with development and land use issues, transportation mobility?
2. What interests, organizations and individuals should participate in a stakeholder committee process to develop consensus recommendations on affordable workforce housing issues in Monroe County?
3. Should the County convene a stakeholder committee to develop recommendations on workforce housing in Monroe County? What coordination is needed with any other ongoing related programs or processes, at the county, city, state, federal, private and non-profit sector level that might impact the issue of affordable workforce housing in Monroe County?
4. What is needed in terms of base line current data on affordable and workforce housing programs in Monroe County? What information and data on best practices should be considered in any subsequent stakeholder consensus building process.

The Assessment Report will summarize the stakeholder views on workforce housing and address the potential of a stakeholder committee consensus process. The report will include recommendations on whether a stakeholder committee should be convened, its scope, the perspectives represented and the stakeholders who could participate on the committee, and participation opportunities for the interested public. The recommendations will also address any coordination needed with other local, regional, state, federal, private or non-profit programs or activities.

## **Next Steps**

In September and October 2014, Bob Jones, Director of the FCRC Consensus Center FSU will be conducting face-to-face and phone interviews as well as meetings with a diverse group of organizations and individuals across Monroe County who are interested in and directly impacted by work force housing issues.

If you or your organization believes they would like to contribute their perspective on workforce housing issues in Monroe County, please contact Bob Jones at [rmjones@fsu.edu](mailto:rmjones@fsu.edu) or Christine Hurley, Monroe County Growth Management Division director at [Hurley-Christine@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov](mailto:Hurley-Christine@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov) or Mayra Tezanos at [Tezanos-Mayra@monroecounty-fl.gov](mailto:Tezanos-Mayra@monroecounty-fl.gov)