



NEWS RELEASE

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SARASOTA AWARDED \$23 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT FOR HOUSING; JOBS

Sarasota, FL: The City of Sarasota and Sarasota County through the Office of Housing and Community Development will receive a \$23 million grant from the federal government for neighborhood stabilization programs, which will include the construction of Janie's Garden Phase III. Sarasota is just one of 56 organizations in the nation to be awarded one of the competitive grants, according to HUD, which made the announcement yesterday.

The grant money is earmarked for the North Sarasota area for four specific uses:

- Purchase, rehabilitate and sell 100 foreclosed houses – approx. \$17 million
- Construction of Janie's Garden Phase III public housing project - approx. \$2.5 million
- Construction of 17 houses on vacant property - approx. \$1.7 million
- Purchase and raze dilapidated houses - approx. \$100,000

The boundaries of the grant area roughly are: University Pkwy. to the north; Ringling Blvd. to the south; Tamiami Trail to the west and Lockwood Ridge Rd. to the east.

The grants awarded were based on the most innovative ideas throughout the country. "This is great news for the Sarasota community," said Don Hadsell, Director of the Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD). "I really think we received this award because plans were already in place to revitalize North Sarasota. It's the City Commission's top priority. But, when the housing market crashed, it delayed our efforts," said Hadsell. For example, funding for the Janie Poe Phase III project dried up at the state level and it was expected to be delayed.

OHCD received a similar \$7.1 million neighborhood stabilization grant last March. Those funds currently are being used to purchase foreclosed properties in North Port, unincorporated Sarasota County and the Bee Ridge Corridor. By collaborating with a national firm, OHCD receives early notification when a foreclosed property is about to be placed on the market. OHCD also works closely with the Florida Solar Institute to ensure that rehabilitated houses are energy efficient. "We are performing very well with that program," said Hadsell.

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“So, it may have given us an edge with the \$23 million grant we just received.” HUD recently invited OHCD to speak at a statewide conference about Sarasota’s successful program.

The \$23 million grant is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, with an emphasis on redeveloping economically depressed areas and creating jobs. The rehabilitation of more than 100 houses and the construction of Janie’s Garden Phase III will boost employment in the local construction industry. “All these jobs will be in the building sector which has been especially hard hit in Sarasota. Instead of building new homes we’ll be rehabilitating already existing houses, and we’ll put unemployed workers back to work,” said Hadsell.

For more information contact Don Hadsell, Office of Housing and Community Development: donald.hadsell@sarasotagov.com

To learn more about HUD’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program visit: www.hud.gov