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Commissioners approve grant agreements for housing assistance

Fort Myers, FL, Nov. 1, 2022 – The Lee Board of County Commissioners voted Tuesday to award Disaster Assistance State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) grant agreements totaling about \$4.5 million to nonprofit housing development organizations to assist households affected by Hurricane Ian.

The grant agreements provide funding for:

Habitat for Humanity of Lee and Hendry Counties, Inc.

- \$2.5 million – Owner-occupied rehabilitation for a minimum of 32 low-income households.

Lee County Housing Development Corp

- \$275,025 – Owner-occupied rehabilitation for a minimum of three households affected by Hurricane Ian with priority being given to special needs, very low and low-income households.
- \$250,000 – Mortgage and Insurance Deductible Assistance for a minimum of 15 households affected by Hurricane Ian with priority being given to special needs, very low and low-income households.
- \$500,000 – Rental Assistance for a minimum of 20 households affected by Hurricane Ian with priority being given to special needs, very low and low-income households.

Center for Independent Living Gulf Coast

- \$970,000 – Owner-occupied rehabilitation for minimum of 10 homes affected by Hurricane Ian with priority being given to special needs, very low and low-income households.

There is no requirement for the county or the applicant to provide a match for SHIP funds awarded.

Lee County has received funds since 1999 from the SHIP program for the provision of affordable housing. The SHIP program is funded by revenues collected by the state from a surcharge on documentary stamps and distributed to counties and local governments as grants. Distributions are made on a population-based formula through the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, a state agency created to assist in providing a range of affordable housing opportunities.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation annually receives funding from the Legislature for the SHIP program, of which \$5 million is set aside to be used in the event of a natural disaster. This year, the disaster funds have been allocated to the six counties hardest hit by Hurricane Ian. Lee County will receive more than \$2 million of the annual set aside to assist eligible households whose primary residence sustained damage as a result of Hurricane Ian pay their insurance deductibles.

For residents living in unincorporated Lee County, Town of Fort Myers Beach, Village of Estero, or the Cities of Bonita Springs, Fort Myers or Sanibel, the application for assistance will be available Friday, Nov. 4, at www.leegov.com/dcd/planning/ship. For residents living in Cape Coral, please email housing@capecoral.gov for information.

Other action Tuesday:

In another agenda item, commissioners voted to reallocate \$205,970 previously allocated to LARC, Inc. for the rehabilitation of a residential group home on West North Shore Avenue in North Fort Myers. The structure was destroyed by Hurricane Ian.

LARC, Inc., requested their previously awarded SHIP funds be reallocated to allow replacement of the destroyed residential group home with new construction on property located at on SW 8th Place, Cape Coral. The new residential group home will house six very-low income developmentally disabled individuals.

The SHIP program is solely funded by the State and is locally governed by the strategies in the Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP). The program places a priority on serving very low, low and special needs households.

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