

# FAHROgram

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS

July/August 2018

## President's Message

### A Tremendous Forum and Summit

We had a great turnout at the FAHRO Executive Directors' Forum and Florida Housing Summit in Jupiter a few weeks ago. As always, my favorite part of the forum was the brainstorming and open discussions. Every time we meet and discuss the issues, I'm grateful for the expertise that our FAHRO members share and the breadth of ideas resonating from our group that represents housing authorities of all sizes. I always walk away with valuable information and so many great ideas. I'm in complete awe of you and am tremendously grateful for all that you shared during the forum. And then there's the outstanding legal issues presentation given by Ric Gilmore of the Saxon Gilmore firm. As always, we sincerely appreciate Ric's willingness to attend our meetings and to share legal updates on topics of critical importance to PHAs.

During the Florida Housing Summit, we heard directly from NAHRO (Georgi Banna, director of policy and program development) and PHADA (Crystal N. Wojciechowski, policy analyst) about their work on the exciting goals they have regarding important issues that affect our agencies. In addition, Jane Dixon from TAG Associates gave an update on the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC), reporting on ideas recently shared with the FHFC that have the goal of achieving greater PHA participation in its programs. On behalf of all FAHRO members, thank you to Georgi, Crystal and Jane for attending the Florida Housing Summit and for your hard work, steadfast diligence and constant advocacy on behalf of all PHAs.

Oscar Anderson with Southern Strategies Group provided the latest update re-



Attendees of the FAHRO Executive Directors' Forum during a brainstorming session

garding the upcoming CDBG-DR funding. More information about this disaster relief funding will be made available on FAHRO's website and/or through email from FAHRO. And last, but certainly not least, many thanks to FPHASIF for its generous support of the Executive Directors' Forum and Housing Summit.

For the past two years we've headed south to Key West and then east to Jupiter for the Executive Directors' Forum, so next year we're planning to take it north to the beautiful white sands of the Florida panhandle. Until then though, we'll be meeting soon in Orlando for our Annual Convention and Trade Show. FAHRO's conference chair and education committee have again done an excellent job in assuring that the educational lineup will be beneficial to all participants. There will be several exceptional educational tracks—providing something for everyone, from executive directors and management and maintenance staff to housing authority commissioners.

See **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** on page 5

## Calendar

**NAHRO Summer Conference**  
July 27-29, 2018  
San Francisco Marriott Marquis Hotel  
San Francisco, California

**FAHRO Annual Convention & Trade Show**  
August 6-8, 2018  
Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort  
Bonnet Creek  
Orlando, Florida

**NAHRO National Conference & Exhibition**  
October 25-27, 2018  
Hyatt Regency Atlanta  
Atlanta, Georgia

Need specific training or classes?  
Email [Corey@FAHRO.org](mailto:Corey@FAHRO.org) to help set them up!

### Visit the FAHRO Website!



[www.FAHRO.org](http://www.FAHRO.org)

Internal Circulation



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### Executive Director (Non-Voting Member)

Corey Mathews, CAE, Executive Director  
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7/2018

## Member Feedback

*Do you need help with a project or issue and want to see if any of our readers have the answer? Has a colleague done something wonderful that deserves an attaboy or attagirl? Or are you just frustrated and want to vent? Here is your chance to (anonymously if you wish) say thanks, ask for assistance, vent your frustrations, express your opinion or let us know how you feel.*

- Congratulations to Lakeland Housing Authority on its June 4 groundbreaking for Twin Lakes Estates, Phase I. The new development will be a 100-unit senior building providing a mixture of public housing, project-based vouchers and tax credit rental units. This is the first of three redevelopment phases to replace an old public housing community. Persons in attendance included U.S. Congressman Dennis Ross (who was instrumental in securing funding for the project), HUD SE Regional Public Housing Director Ellis Henry and President/CEO Matthew Rieger of Housing Trust Group, the developer partner. LHA Executive Director Ben Stevenson gave the welcome. Mr. Henry expressed appreciation for seeing a new development cosponsored by HUD in his hometown.



*LHA Commissioners Joseph DiCesare, Rev. Richard Richardson and Shelly Asbury; HTG representatives unknown, Rodrigo Paredes and Matthew Rieger; Ellis Henry; LHA Commissioner Lorenzo Robinson; LHA Executive Director Ben Stevenson; LHA Commissioner Eddie Hall; Congressman Ross; Pastor Tim Blackburn; and unknown*

If you would like to contribute to Sounding Off, please email your comments to Susan Trainor, FAHROgram editor, [editor.trainor@gmail.com](mailto:editor.trainor@gmail.com). 

## Legal Update

# Recent Court Decisions Regarding the Fair Credit Reporting Act

*by Claire Carter, Esq.*

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), 15 USC § 1681 *et seq.*, provides protection to employees by requiring employers to notify and request written permission from an employee or potential employee when performing a background credit check. The FCRA requires the employer to tell the employee or potential employee that the background credit check may factor into employment-related decisions. The FCRA also requires a pre-adverse action notice, meaning an employer cannot make an employment decision based on the background credit check without first providing a copy of the background check to the current or poten-

tial employee and allowing that employee a reasonable amount of time to dispute the information.

If an employer fails to follow the FCRA requirements, an employee may be able to seek damages. Many lawsuits and class actions have been brought against employers due to technical violations of the FCRA, but recent court decisions have been favorable to employers. For example, in *Lewis v. Sm. Airlines Co.*,



*Claire Carter, Esq.*

**See LEGAL UPDATE on page 5**

## FAHRO Headquarters Has Moved!

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# We Love Our Lindsey Software.

## **Bartow Housing Authority**

Executive Director: Catherine E. Reddick  
Bartow, Florida

*“I have been using  
Lindsey for more than  
23 years, and I would  
not use anything else.  
Lindsey has so many  
good shortcuts, that it  
doesn’t take me long  
to do anything!”*

— CATHERINE REDDICK —

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- User-friendly software
- Easy to learn
- Economical
- Saves time
- Free, unlimited training
- Great support
- Mobile solutions
- Online rental applications

### **THE SITUATION**

Catherine Reddick, Executive Director of Bartow Housing Authority in Florida loves to talk about Lindsey software. With more than 23 years as a user, she feels that Lindsey is user-friendly, very easy to learn and helps her do her job more effectively.

Catherine began her career in public housing at the Winter Haven Housing Authority. After 13 years, she moved to the Bartow Housing Authority as Executive Director and has been there for 11 years.

### **THE SOLUTION**

Lindsey is a total solution for Catherine and her staff and she is not afraid to tell other agencies. “I know I am not their largest client, but they always treat me like I am,” says Catherine.

Bartow HA uses almost every module Lindsey has, plus the mobile solutions and HousingManager.com online rental applications. They have made an investment in the entire package and like the way everything works together.

### **MOBILE**

Catherine comments, “When we first got the mobile products, I was a little afraid of making the change. Then I went out and did an inspection on the iPad myself and realized that it was much easier than I ever expected.”

### **HOUSINGMANAGER.COM**

Moving applications online has been extremely beneficial in reducing tenant traffic in the office. Tenants are very versatile and have adapted well to filling out applications from their computer, tablet or mobile device.

### **TRAINING & SUPPORT**

Catherine and her staff take advantage of the free training opportunities whenever possible, attending webinars and using the online Portal. “We use support when there is a problem, or something I just cannot figure out. They know me by my first name,” says Catherine with a smile.

Bartow Housing Authority is a satisfied Lindsey customer. After 23 years using Lindsey, Catherine says it would be hard to find another company that could change her mind. “Lindsey has made an investment in this industry by creating products that make my job easier, and I have made an investment in Lindsey.”

2018 WL 400775, at \*1 (N.D. Tex. Jan. 11, 2018), Lewis sued Southwest Airlines for violating the FCRA by failing to provide the FCRA disclosures to him in a standalone document when he applied for employment, and for including extraneous material in the disclosures. The court found the inclusion of the extraneous information in the disclosures violated the FCRA, but concluded that the violation was not willful as there were no appeals court decisions in existence addressing this issue at the time Lewis applied for employment.

In *Branch v. Gov't Employees Ins. Co.*, 323 F.R.D. 539 (E.D. Va. 2018), Branch applied for and was offered a job with GEICO, which procured a background report of Branch. GEICO graded Branch's report "Fail" because of a conviction appearing in the background report. A GEICO representative spoke to Branch by telephone, during which Branch alleged that GEICO rescinded the job offer. GEICO later sent Branch a pre-adverse action notice. Branch sued GEICO as a class action for violating the FCRA for failing to provide the

pre-adverse action notice prior to grading her report Fail, which Branch alleged was a final decision. The court denied certification of the class, stating that the Fail grade was not an adverse action, but rather it was GEICO's rescinding of the job offer based on the Fail grade, which did not necessarily happen to all potential class members.

Employers in Florida should be aware of the FCRA requirements and any related Florida statutes. In order to avoid lawsuits alleging FCRA violations, employers should have their background check consent forms reviewed by an attorney to ensure compliance. Employers should also timely provide pre-adverse notices and ensure employees involved in the hiring and firing process are properly trained.

*Claire Carter, Esq., is an associate with Saxon Gilmore & Carraway PA. She practices in the areas of creditors' rights, commercial and real estate litigation and commercial and real estate transactions. She can be reached at 813/314-4527 or ccarter@saxongilmore.com.*

Please register for our annual convention, and bring your staff and commissioners. Please also encourage your vendors to attend as well. And lastly, get involved with FAHRO if you're not already. Whether you're a longtime housing industry employee or a newly appointed one, get involved with FAHRO. We have so much more work to do.

I look forward to seeing you all in Orlando! 🌿

**Register today for  
the FAHRO Annual  
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Trade Show!**

**See page 6.**

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# THE FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS

# 2018 ANNUAL CONVENTION AND TRADE SHOW



## FAHRO Annual Convention & Trade Show Registration Form

### THREE EASY WAYS TO REGISTER



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**Online:**  
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Rates for FAHRO attendees start at \$159 per night and can be made by calling 407/390-2300. Once a reservationist picks up, mention you are with the "FAHRO Convention."

Use one form for up to six registrants from the same company - Please print! Copies of this form can be used to register more than six people.

Registration Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_

Please print each registrant name below, then circle the correct amount for each.

Name #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name #4 \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name #5 \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name #6 \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

|          | Member Registrant | Non-Member Registrant | Wednesday Only | Thursday Only | Add After July 28th | Total    |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|
| #1 _____ | \$369             | \$449                 | \$169          | \$259         | \$50                | \$ _____ |
| #2 _____ | \$349             | \$429                 | \$169          | \$259         | \$50                | \$ _____ |
| #3 _____ | \$349             | \$429                 | \$169          | \$259         | \$50                | \$ _____ |
| #4 _____ | \$349             | \$429                 | \$169          | \$259         | \$50                | \$ _____ |
| #5 _____ | \$349             | \$429                 | \$169          | \$259         | \$50                | \$ _____ |
| #6 _____ | \$349             | \$429                 | \$169          | \$259         | \$50                | \$ _____ |

Each registration comes with a single ticket to each function.

Extra Cocktail Party and Banquet Tickets (August 8) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$66 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Method of Payment:  Check (payable to FAHRO)  Visa  MasterCard

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Cancellation Policy:** A refund of your registration fee will be made minus a \$75 processing fee, if cancellation is received in writing at least seven days prior to the date of the event. Alternates are encouraged to attend for any pre-registrant who is unable to attend. For our compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, please contact our office if you need any special accommodations. A minimum of seven days' notice is required.



# FAHRO Executive Directors' Forum & Florida Housing Summit

June 6-8, 2018  
Wyndham Grand Jupiter at Harbourside Place  
Jupiter, Florida



*John Nelson, Palatka Housing Authority*



*Ben Stevenson, Lakeland Housing Authority*



*Lisa Landers, Winter Haven Housing Authority,  
and Vivian Bryant, Orlando Housing Authority*



*Manny Castillo, Key West Housing Authority*



*William Russell, Sarasota Housing Authority,  
and Abe Singh, Area Housing Commission*



*Patsy Rice, Winter Park Housing Authority*



*Shirley Erazo, Delray Beach Housing Authority,  
Debbie Johnson, Pinellas County Housing  
Authority, and Jakeleen Fernandez, Delray  
Housing Group*



*Georgi Banna, NAHRO, and Ann Deibert,  
Broward County Housing Authority*



*John Hurt, Riviera Beach Housing Authority,  
Misty Hanlon, Marianna Housing Authority, and  
Tara Finch, Chipley Housing Authority*

# FAHRO Executive Directors' Forum & Florida Housing Summit



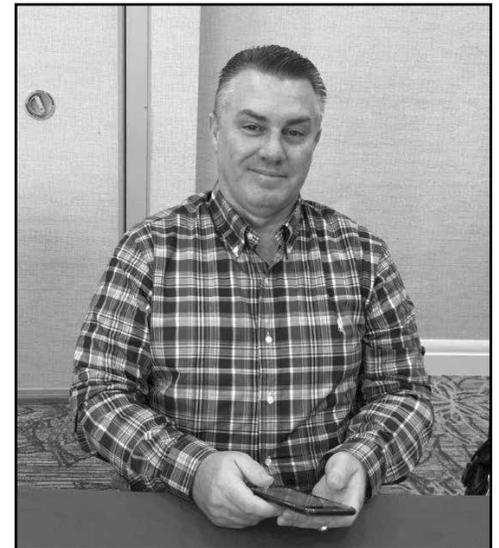
*Christy Holland, Northwest Florida Regional Housing Authority, Susan Christophel, Columbia County Housing Authority, and Vicki Hogge, Live Oak Housing Authority*



*Oscar Anderson, Southern Strategies Group*



*Herb Hernandez, Cocoa Beach Housing Authority, Miguell Del Campillo, Housing Authority of the City of Miami Beach, and Laurel Robinson, West Palm Beach Housing Authority*



*Mike Bean, Brevard County Housing Authority*



*Catherine Reddick, Bartow Housing Authority, Donnie Singer, Hernando County Housing Authority, and Julia Hale, Pahokee Housing Authority*



*Becky-Sue Mercer, Arcadia Housing Authority, Shannon Young, Seminole County Housing Authority, and Marcus Goodson, Ft. Myers Housing Authority*



*Robbin Redd, Tarpon Springs Housing Authority*

# Wyndham Grand Jupiter at Harbourside Place • Jupiter, Florida



*Shirley Erazo, Delray Beach Housing Authority, Jakeleen Fernandez, Delray Housing Group, and Julio Ponce, Hialeah Housing Authority*



*Herb Hernandez, Cocoa Beach Housing Authority, Pam Davis, Gainesville Housing Authority, and Tam English, Housing Authority of the City of Fort Lauderdale*



*Mike Bean, Brevard County Housing Authority, and Ben Stevenson, Lakeland Housing Authority*



*Phillip Goombs, West Palm Beach Housing Authority*



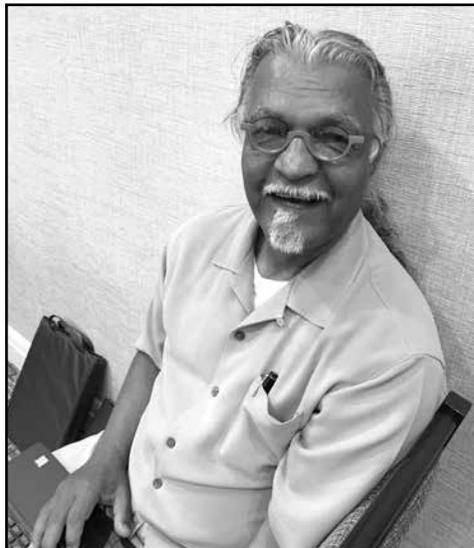
*Gail Sansbury, Fort Walton Beach Housing Authority*



*Teresa Pope, Housing Authority of the City of New Smyrna Beach*



*Pat Dexter, Mulberry Housing Authority, Plant City*



*Abe Singh, Area Housing Commission*



*Corey Mathews, FAHRO*

# Message of Success Arcadian Followed an Action Plan

by Craig Garrett, Arcadian Editor

Ivory McGill is proof that life's setbacks need not last forever.

The Arcadian resident, who is 33, had been living in a subsidized residence in the Arcadia Housing Authority complex for about five years. Today, McGill and her three kids live in a ranch-style house in Arcadia that she has mortgaged. She works as a family support counselor for a nonprofit and sees only good things happening down the road.

But McGill's journey from there to here wasn't easy, she said. Returning to Arcadia from east Florida in 2012, "I had no money, no nothing," she said. "I knew I had to start fresh."

What happened at her lowest point could be called providence by some, pure luck by others. McGill's struggles came to the attention of Becky-Sue Mercer, director for the Arcadia Housing Authority, a rent-subsidized neighborhood of about 150 units for qualified low-income families, seniors and the disabled. McGill was placed on the list of eligible renters and eventually was awarded a three-bedroom, one-bath unit.

Mercer said McGill grinded it out, working and raising her three children over a five-year stay at AHA. And always on time with the rent. "Ivory," Mercer said, "is a prime example of living in a

tough world, knuckling down and doing everything right. She repaired her credit, saved money and finally was able to buy a house. She used the system to her advantage. The way you're supposed to."

Mercer and others in the business of helping struggling families understand the successes of an Ivory McGill are few. Numbers don't lie: DeSoto County is last in child well-being statistics in Florida's 67 counties, and the percent of single parents raising children in DeSoto is three out of four, for example. Those in low-income circumstances dreaming like an Ivory McGill must be determined and fight to achieve their goals, Mercer and others insist.

And it's not easy. Yet, some make the break.

A smallish woman with an easy smile, McGill sat in the family room of the Arcadia home she bought in November, proud of the place, but a bit weary on a Friday after a week of working at the RCMA center in Arcadia, where she advocates for families. Her kids and a boyfriend are in the game room, doing what makes them happy in the privacy of a safe home on a quiet street.

McGill recommends those parked in subsidized housing make a plan to move beyond that temporary stop sign:



*Ivory McGill saved money and followed a budget to escape public housing and to purchase a home in Arcadia.*

build and live by a budget, save money/tax returns, take real steps to reach goals, spend only on what is needed, not what is wanted, she said.

"Your today is not always your tomorrow," she said of her mission to succeed. "Keep your faith, believe in God, knowing that's where your help comes from."

And for struggling single parents or those raising children in a tough situation?

"Push your kids towards their goals," she said. "Get out of the mindset of settling or thinking you're not good enough. You can be or do what you want with determination and hard work."

Reprinted with permission from *Arcadian, The Sun*, April 12, 2018. 🌿

# Goodson Honored by City of Fort Myers and U.S. Senate

Marcus D. Goodson, former executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers, was recently honored by the City of Fort Myers and the United States Senate for his 16 years of service with the housing authority.

Goodson announced in May he was stepping down to pursue a new career in private consulting. His last day on the job was June 29.

At a community farewell reception, Mayor Randall Henderson of the City of Fort Myers presented Goodson with the Key to the City. On behalf of U.S.

Senator Bill Nelson, Regional Director Elizabeth King presented Goodson with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition.

"Your contribution to the people of Fort Myers and Lee County will be sorely missed. Thank you for your hard work, expertise and personal dedication to improving and developing affordable housing in Lee County," wrote Senator Nelson in a letter read at the event.

Since joining HACFM in 2002, Goodson has been noted for turning what was a low performing housing authority into



*Marcus Goodson with Elizabeth King, regional director for U.S. Senator Bill Nelson*

**See GOODSON on page 12**

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# The Courts of Village Square Celebrates Grand Opening

Village Square Phase II recently held its Grand Opening at the Courts of Village Square in Delray Beach. The ceremony began in the courtyard of the property, with a welcome, remarks and recognitions, followed by the cutting of the ribbon at the entry of the Resource Center, where attendees took a tour and enjoyed refreshments. Each attendee was given an engraved coffee mug in remembrance of this milestone.

The dignitaries and special guests in attendance were the Honorable Mayor Shelly Petrolia, Deputy Vice Mayor Shirley Johnson, City Manager Mark Lauzier, CRA Executive Director Jeff Costello, Housing Finance Authority representative David Brandt, members of the Delray Beach Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, representatives from the CRA and the City of Delray, residents and staff.

According to Mayor Petrolia, “All people within our community deserve to have adequate housing options and opportunities. While the Courts of Village Square fulfills only a partial need, it is



*Ribbon Cutting Ceremony participants (front row) David Brandt, Rev. Marcia Beam, Dorothy Ellington, Commissioner Shirley Johnson, Mayor Shelly Petrolia and (back row) Jeff Costello, Mark Lauzier, Guam Sims, Clifton Phillips, Greg Wicklman, Jesse Saginor and Ezra Krieg*

another step toward promoting housing affordability as a vital focus as our community continues to grow and change. The values that are central to the city’s vision—diversity, inclusivity, sustainability—are supported by providing a range of housing affordability.”

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development states that an esti-



*Delray Beach Housing Authority staff (standing) Lisa Ramcharan, Bridgette Huff, Denise Zanders, Charmaine Jackson, Rose Clay, Miguela Nurse, Marimer Marquez, Emma Tisdale, Ada DeLosRios and (sitting) Shirley Erazo, chief operations officer DBHA, Clifton Phillips, Roundstone Development LLC, Dorothy Ellington, president/CEO DBHA/DHG, and Shirley Johnson, deputy vice mayor*

mated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50% of their annual incomes for housing. A family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States. 🌿

## **GOODSON from page 10**

a high performer designation by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. He also spearheaded the largest affordable housing development project in the history of Southwest Florida, the Renaissance Preserve community. He served a two-year term as FAHRO president (2011-12), and in 2015 the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers was awarded Outstanding Agency of the Year by FAHRO.

“It’s been a tremendous experience for me these past 16 years to have worked with the amazing staff at the housing authority, local, state and national housing representatives and government officials, as well as funding and construction teams on improving the status of affordable housing across Southwest Florida,” Goodson said. “I want to embark on this new journey while I still have the time and energy to do so.”

Goodson has partnered with Jose Cintron, former director of the HUD Mi-



*Marcus Goodson with Mayor Randall Henderson of the City of Fort Myers*

ami Field Office, to create Cinmarc and Associates, a public/affordable housing consulting firm. 🌿

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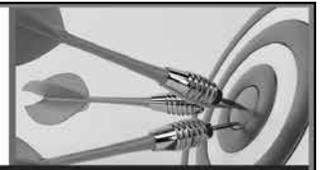
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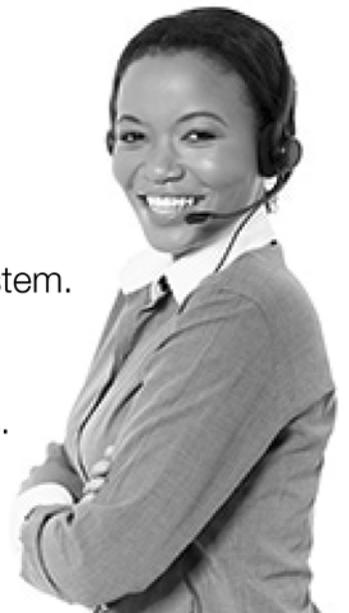
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## Want to Be a Leader? Start With Empathy

A study released in 2016 found that 60% of CEOs viewed their organizations as empathetic. At the same time, only 25% of employees viewed their employers as empathetic.

This is a wide disconnect between management and employees.



Businessolver's Workplace Empathy Monitor found that nearly a third of employees believe employers care primarily about profits and less about them. "Businessolver Data Reveals Only One-in-Four Employees View the Workplace as Empathetic," [www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com) (Jun. 29, 2016).

The same report identifies behaviors associated with positive workplace empathy:

- Treating employees well
- Listening to customers' needs and feedback
- Maintaining ethical business practices
- Caring about employees' mental and physical health

Generally, empathy is the ability to identify with or understand another person's feelings and circumstances.

The Workplace Empathy Monitor report also revealed that almost half of employees polled said they were willing to work longer hours for an employer that shows empathy.

Employees are willing to work harder and are more loyal when they believe leadership is empathetic.

Generally, empathy is the ability to identify with or understand another person's feelings and circumstances. In other words, it is the ability to put oneself in another's shoes.

Empathy creates trust and loyalty, and without these, recruitment, retention, creativity and productivity all suffer. As the survey shows and common sense dictates, employees are willing to work harder and are more loyal when they believe leadership is empathetic.

Most people can agree that empathy is important. The question is how best to bridge the gap between management and employees when it comes to empathy.

Building empathy means building relationships.

First, listen to your employees, make eye contact with them, give them undivided attention and listen to what they are saying to you. When you are able to truly mean "I understand," it gives that person the feeling of being heard, recognized and appreciated.

Second, value your work relationships and care about your customers and colleagues as individuals. When you show you care for others, they will trust you, share more and be willing to give of themselves to help attain success for you and your organization.

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*Mission Statement*

*FAHRO is committed to the professional development of the people who provide public and assisted housing in Florida by offering a network for increased communication and education. We will continue to support legislation for the improvement and development of affordable housing and economic opportunities.*

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