

# **CITY OF JACKSONVILLE**

## **EMPLOYER ASSISTED HOUSING**



**Speaker: Jeannie Fewell**  
Rayonier Inc.

# Trends growing faster than solutions

- Worker shortage
- Employers being forced to pay more and not just in wages but in:
  - Quality of life issues
  - Creative packages of benefits
  - Retain and recruit staffers

# Jacksonville's overall growth management strategy

- Revitalize older areas and brownfield sites
- Provide a DRI option for addressing affordable housing and traffic impacts by having employees live close to work
- Retain and attract a strong labor force
- Improve quality of life issues

# Jacksonville Employer Assisted Homeownership Program - Players

- City of Jacksonville
  - Federal HOME funds
  - State SHIP funds
  - Freddie Mac Grant funds
- Shands Hospital
- Freddie Mac
- Local Lenders
- Consumer Credit Counseling

# Goals of the effort

- Shands Hospital
  - Employee retention and recruitment – nurses in particular
  - Employee benefits package
- City
  - Help the Springfield area
  - Increase homeownership
  - Leverage public monies
  - Get an employer assistance program going



# Basic program features

- Shands Hospital
  - Viewed as an employee benefit
  - Second mortgage as a deferred loan
  - \$5,000 amount, 5 year term, forgiven at 20% per year of employment with Shands
  - If employee leaves before end of five years remaining amount is repaid to Shands

## Basic program features (continued)

- Home buyer education counseling sessions by Consumer Credit Counseling
- Employees were allowed to attend homebuyer counseling during work hours

## Basic program features (continued)

- Could combine with City downpayment assistance program
- Downpayment Assistance Program
  - For income eligible buyers, the city offered up to \$20,000 in the form of a deferred loan forgiven at the end of a 15-year period
  - Must live in the home as primary residence

# Basic program features (continued)

- City Features
  - Must purchase home in a certain geographic area – Springfield (near the hospital)
  - Limit on purchase price and home value as per state and federal rules

# Lessons Learned

- Let employer design the program, and provide support as needed
- Do not require employer to adhere to SHIP and other program requirements with their money
- Include a homebuyer education component – low cost, high benefit
- If you restrict to a geographic area, check the market for housing availability, and plan to expand the area over time
- Find the right contact within the organization to be the program champion (start with personnel/benefits office)