

April 2022



FLORIDA BLACK CAUCUS
OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

In This Issue

- **President's Message**
- **General Membership Meeting**
- **FBC-LEO Webinar**
- **FBC-LEO Online Membership Directory**
- **Member News**
- **FBC-LEO Essay Contest**
- **Unity Agenda**
- **From Our Partners**
- **Save the Date**
- **Events & Training Opportunities**
- **Find Us on Social Media**

President's Message



Greetings FBC-LEO Members and Friends,

I am sure it comes as no surprise to that I am still bursting with joy and gratitude from last month's 2022 Spring Conference. It was amazing seeing so many of you in attendance, and I am sure that if you were there, you share in my enthusiasm for the connections made with your fellow local elected officials and the wealth of knowledge that was shared with us by our panelists, sponsors and keynote speakers. There were so many highlights from the two days we shared, that it would be impossible for me to pinpoint just one. The collaboration

and synergy that I felt between attendees and speakers, and the showcasing of talent and expertise from our own members who presented, leaves me feeling very hopeful about the future of FBC-LEO.

I recently learned that April is the National Month of Hope. I thought about what that means to me in regard to FBC-LEO. At the start of my presidency, "the best is yet to

come" is a phrase I would often repeat in my communication with you. Last month, I was blessed with the opportunity to see that promise become a reality with our record-breaking conference registration numbers and sponsorships. Yet I believe what we have seen is only the beginning and my hope is that the best is still yet to come for us!

As a reminder, on May 17, at 2:00 p.m. ET, we will be presenting a webinar on **Affordable Housing**. Join us for this engaging, educational opportunity with a joint panel from the **Florida Housing Coalition** and **Habitat for Humanity** Affiliate Organizations.

Special thanks to every single individual that contributed to making our spring conference a success in any way, large or small. I am forever grateful to you all and I wish you continued peace, blessings and most importantly HOPE in the days ahead!

Sincerely,

Teresa Watkins Brown

President Teresa Watkins Brown
Councilwoman, City of Fort Myers

2022 Spring Conference Recap

Click the image below to view the Spring Conference recap.



[Click here](#) to view conference photos.

General Membership Meeting



The next FBC-LEO General Membership Meeting will be held on April 12, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

General membership meetings begin promptly at 6:00 p.m. and typically last no more than 30 minutes.

Click the "Register Now" button below to register, and use the instructions below to save the meeting to your calendar.

[Register Here](#)

[View Agenda](#)

You will receive a confirmation email from "FLC Association Services" with the link to join the meeting. Beneath the Join Meeting link, you will have the option to add the meeting to your calendar, select your calendar type from the drop-down menu, and the calendar invite will download. Open the download and click save in your calendar.

FBC-LEO Webinar



Solutions to the Affordable Housing Crisis in Florida

**Tuesday, May 17, 2022
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. ET**

The affordable housing crisis is a major problem threatening the economic growth and stability of many local communities. Florida currently leads the nation in housing unaffordability, with over half of its renters spending more than 30% of their income on

housing. While there is no easy fix for the affordable housing crisis, there is a question that must be asked. How can we solve the affordable housing crisis?

Join host Shwanda Barnette and panelists as they explore the current state of Affordable Housing in Florida and what can be done to address this crisis in your communities.

Panelists Include:

Becky Lucas, Chief Executive Officer, Habitat for Humanity of Lee and Hendry Counties
Sean King, Director of Government Relations & Advocacy, Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas and West Pasco Counties
Jaimie Ross, President & CEO, Florida Housing Coalition

Hosts:

Councilwoman Teresa Watkins-Brown, FBC-LEO President, Ft. Myers
Shwanda Barnette, JD, FLC Ambassador

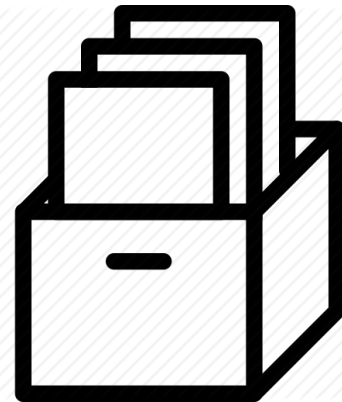
Register Today

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Online FBC-LEO Directory

In June, FBC-LEO will release its online membership directory. Being placed in your organization's online membership directory is an important membership benefit, that allows members to connect and network easily.

If you have not submitted your photo to fbcleo@flcities.com, please do so no later than Friday, April 29.



Member News



Welcome to our new FBC-LEO Members

Warmest welcome! We are delighted to have you as members of the FBC-LEO organization and look forward to getting to know you.

- **Vanessa Joseph, Esq.**, City Clerk, North Miami
- **Crystal Wagar**, Councilmember, Miami Shores
- **Kenneth T. Welch**, Mayor, St. Petersburg

2022 Florida League of Cities Home Rule Heroes

FBC-LEO congratulates its members who were recognized with Home Rule Hero Awards for their work during the 2022 legislative session.

The municipal leaders listed below earned this award for their tireless efforts to protect the Home Rule powers of Florida municipalities and advance the Florida League of Cities' legislative agenda.

Congratulations, and thank you for you efforts!

- **Mayor Michael Blake**, City of Cocoa
- **Commissioner Rufus Borom**, City of Palatka
- **Mayor Jackie Gary Clarke**, Village of Indiantown
- **Vice Mayor Anthony Dowling**, Village of Indiantown
- **Councilwoman Mary Estime-Irvin**, City of North Miami
- **Ella Gilbert**, Deputy City Attorney, City of Port St. Lucie
- **Mayor Janice Hart**, Town of Havana
- **Mayor Pro Tem Shannon Hayes**, City of Crestview
- **Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr.**, City of Fort Pierce
- **Councilwoman NanDrycka King Albert**, City of Midway

- **Vice Mayor Leo E. Longworth**, City of Bartow
- **Commissioner Joseph McMullen**, Town of Oakland
- **Mayor Janice D. Mortimer**, City of Starke
- **Vice Mayor Joshua Simmons**, City of Coral Springs
- **Council Member Guyton Stone**, Village of Indiantown
- **Commissioner Phillip Walker**, City of Lakeland
- **Council Member Teresa Watkins Brown**, City of Fort Myers
- **Commissioner Beverly Williams**, City of Lauderdale Lakes

FBC-LEO Essay Contest

2022 Essay Contest Winner



The winner of this year's essay contest on Abandoned African-American Cemeteries was announced this month at the 2022 Spring Conference.

The \$1,000 Scholarship recipient is Taylor Watson, an impressive Senior at Ocoee High School. She is very passionate about her involvement in the community. Taylor is a member of the Knights Visual Ensemble, Beta Club and National Honor Society. Taylor also participates in multiple activities off-campus while balancing a part-time job.

Taylor will continue her pursuit of greatness at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in the Summer.

Update on 2021 Scholarship Recipient



Errianna Quallo, FBC-LEO's 2021 Essay Contest Winner and Scholarship Recipient applied to nine colleges and was recently accepted into her 9th and final school. In addition to the \$1,000 Scholarship she received from FBC-LEO, she has been offered over one million dollars in scholarships.

She was accepted to:

- University of Florida
- Georgetown University
- Florida State University (Care and Honors)
- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
- Nova Southeastern University (Huizenga Program)
- University of Miami
- Florida International University (Honors)
- University of South Florida (Honors)
- Howard University

Unity Agenda

Attendance at the National League of Cities (NLC) Congressional Cities Conference was filled with many treats including, a visit from President Joe Biden.

President Biden shared his plans to address the need for improved mental health services through an introduction of "The Unity Agenda." President Biden has proposed a budget of over 700 million dollars to improve mental health access and programming.

This budget is just a start, and we must ensure we are instrumental in ensuring our communities are at the forefront of these much-needed services.

Click [here](#) to view the full Unity Agenda.



From Our Partners

Will any members of your city's, town's or village's legislative body have 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 or 50 years of service as of December 31, 2021?

The **Florida League of Cities** (FLC) would like to honor these dedicated elected officials for their service to your municipality with a **Mayor John Land Years of Service Award**. They will be given a framed resolution and a lapel pin that reflect their years of dedicated municipal service.

The deadline to submit the names of your officials to Eryn Russell at erussell@flcities.com is April 29. Contact Eryn via email for more information.

[Download Nomination Form](#)

US Department of Transportation

Last week the Department of Transportation announced that \$2.9 billion is now available for major projects—including those related to rail—through a new funding opportunity that combines three different transportation grant programs. By combining the **INFRA**, **Mega** and **Rural** grant programs under a single Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the new **Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant** (MPDG) seeks to reduce the burden on state and local applicants, making it possible for communities to apply to one, two, or three major programs using a single application and common set of criteria.

Applications for MPDG are due May 23.

Additionally, applications for the **RAISE program** are due April 14.

For more information contact GoRail state director, **Christy Sammon** at **770.301.7359**.

Save the Date

SAVE THE DATE

Be sure all of our upcoming FBC-LEO events are on your calendar.

General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, April 12, 2022
6:00 p.m. ET via Zoom
[Register Here](#)

Annual Breakfast/Business Meeting

August 12, 2022
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. ET
Diplomat Beach Resort - Hollywood
(In conjunction with FLC Annual
Conference)

General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, October 11, 2022
6:00 p.m. ET via Zoom

Annual Membership Reception

Wednesday, November 30, 2022
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. ET
Embassy Suites Orlando
(In conjunction with FLC Legislative
Conference)

Events & Training Opportunities

FLCities Strong Webinar
Monday, April 11, 2022
10:00 a.m. ET



Join hosts Dr. **Scott Paine** and **Shwanda Barnette** in engaging conversations that take listeners beyond today's headlines. They'll explore what cities are doing and can do to turn the challenges of the present into better futures for their cities and residents.

Guests will lay out opportunities for investing federal funds in local initiatives to expand **broadband access** and improve **cybersecurity**. They will also provide an overview of the **Vision Zero initiative** to raise our expectations for the safety of our roads and highways.

Guest speakers include:

- **Angelina Panettieri**, Legislative Director of Information Technology and Communications, National League of Cities
- **Melissa Wandall**, President, National Coalition for Safe Roads and Ambassador, Alert Today Florida
- **Kim Smith**, Vision Zero Project Manager, Space Coast TPO

Register today!

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Florida Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials