

**Topic:** Media  
**Subject:** ABC7: Funds to renovate housing complex awarded  
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## **SARASOTA-**

Money has been award to the Sarasota Housing Authority to begin renovating its Janie Poe housing development. This after the city's housing authority was put on a federal "trouble list".

It was all smiles for the Sarasota Housing Authority. The day they've been waiting for. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation announced the housing authority will be awarded more than \$1 million in tax credits. Funding needed for the renovations at the Janie Poe housing complex.

Justin Storey is a former resident of the Janie Poe housing complex in Sarasota and has relatives who live there now. "It's poor, it's just poor housing. I mean people put in work orders to get stuff fixed and they don't want to come up to it, they don't want to do their jobs. People get paid to do certain things and they don't want to do it."

But that may all be changing. The Sarasota Housing Authority asked the federal government to step in a few years ago to get things back in order.

"It's going to mean a lot to some of these families who have been living in some of these units that are quite frankly, not well designed, weren't well built, very poorly insulated, the maintenance over the years has not been very good," says Sarasota Housing Authority's Bill Russell.

HUD has been working for a couple of years to build back a livable community. What's to come is a newer and much more up to date housing complex.

Russell says the old units need to go. Once knocked down, the new buildings will be much more modern. "The structures are so obsolete at this point that it does not provide a very sound living environment for our families so they're going to be leaving a very distressful public housing unit and move back into a house that has modern amenities."

Those improvements and makeovers come after tireless hours of work by city, county and federal authorities. The mayor, in a press conference Friday, displayed her approval. "This is going to be the symbol of the city of Sarasota, coming very, very soon. Thank you all for coming and for your support and we're not done yet."

As for Storey, he lived at Janie Poe and has since moved on. "A lot of people are going to be upset because a lot of people have lived here 10 or 15 years. A lot of people live their whole lives here but what a lot of people don't understand is that the purpose of public housing ...it's a stepping stone, it's not here to be here for along time. You're here to get your stuff together and move on."

Construction and demolition for phase one is set for next year. Residents will be asked to move to another housing complex but we're told they can re-apply to move back to Janie Poe when construction is completed.