

## FRA's Advocacy Program

In Florida today, several major efforts are underway, by state agencies, the legislature, local governments and regional organizations to create jobs and revitalize small businesses in urban areas. One tool that any city or county can employ, to foster business and job creation, is a community redevelopment agency (CRA). Over 200 cities and 10 counties have successfully used a CRA to spur economic development, combat blight, develop infrastructure and revitalize a designated area of their community. When a city or county council agrees, along with the community, that an area needs help – not likely to come unless private incentives and private partnerships are encouraged – there are four steps to creating a CRA. These are outlined in Chapter 163, Part III. The benefit of a CRA is as much in the comprehensive, consistent and continuous nature of the planning required, as the long term funding mechanism put in place. Over time, the investment in the area results in increased property values, and that increase, known as the “increment”, must be reinvested in the area according to the approved redevelopment plan. CRA's often leverage these monies to fund long term projects in partnership with the private sector and other levels of government.

Because local revenues are so limited now, and CRA funding is self determined at the local level, there are often disputes about how best to utilize CRA dollars. The legislature is sometimes asked to get involved in local issues over CRAs. Since there is no state money involved in CRA funding, we strongly support local resolutions to any disputes. If a local community cannot resolve their disputes, there are mechanisms in place to ultimately bring those disputes either to the State Auditor General or the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee of the Florida Legislature.

To check the status of any bill, amendment, committee activity or legislative session, visit <http://www.leg.state.fl.us> or call the FRA office at 850-701-3508.