

3 WAYS TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL FLORIDIANS

Tourists and residents flock to Florida's metropolitan areas to enjoy bustling theme parks, cities that spill into the ocean, and shiny downtown high-rises. Still, just beyond the city limits, the Sunshine State remains much like it was only a few decades ago: ranches, rural communities, and endless acres of citrus groves.

Like any other demographic, rural residents require a diverse housing stock – including affordable housing. Although many organizations aim to provide cost-efficient homes in these areas, they don't always build in the most opportune ways. Here are three strategies to assist rural homeowners beyond the home:

1. Connectivity

Living in a rural community does not mean living a disconnected lifestyle. Easy access into town is essential for providing successful affordable housing. The best way to guarantee connectivity is to place homes close to transit connections such as bus stops and train stations. Public transportation provides a way to get to essential needs and makes owning a car optional – a costly investment for many drivers.

2. Proximity to Essential Needs

Despite finally owning a house, many rural homeowners won't fully benefit from it unless they have access to essential needs. These include jobs, education, healthcare, and grocery stores. This means that rural homebuilders should pay attention to possible assets in these areas, from convenience stores to large employment centers, and build close to them.



3. Solar Power

Solar power's environmental benefits are well-understood, yet its most important economic perk is often ignored: Photovoltaic installations not only create immediate savings, but also build wealth over time. One case study showed that the panels immediately trimmed two-thirds off the user's monthly power bill.

Furthermore, they generated up to \$3,600 per year. Photovoltaic systems make for an excellent savings source for college and retirement.

Rural residents can benefit even more from affordable housing if it is sustainable in three ways: it is well-connected, close to at least some essential needs, and provides alternate sources of income, such as solar power.

Source: <http://www.globalsiteplans.com/environmental-design/3-ways-to-create-opportunities-for-rural-floridians/>