



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
City Commission Agenda Memo  
REGULAR MEETING**

**#25-0376**

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor & Members of the  
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager

**DATE:** June 30, 2025

**TITLE:** Resolution Extending the Code Enforcement Lien Amnesty Program and  
Revise the Discount Structure for Certain Code Enforcement Violations -  
**(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

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**Recommendation**

Staff recommends the City Commission adopt a resolution to extend the Code Enforcement Lien Amnesty Program (Amnesty Program) from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; adjust the reduction amount applied to the lien from ninety percent (90%) to eighty-five percent (85%) for eligible properties; and amend the Amnesty Program's reduction amount structure to limit the reduction to fifty percent (50%) for nuisance violations, repeat violations, noise violations, violations for unregistered and registered vacation rentals, and irreparable or irreversible violations.

**Background**

The City of Fort Lauderdale's Lien Amnesty Program was established by ordinance on September 5, 2023. The Amnesty Program's primary purpose is to provide a proactive and administratively efficient mechanism for the City to resolve long-standing code enforcement liens. Unlike the Special Magistrate lien reduction process available when the Amnesty Program is not authorized, the Amnesty Program allows qualifying property owners with no active code enforcement violations to settle their liens at a significantly reduced rate of ten percent (10%) of the total lien value plus administrative costs. This approach simplifies the settlement process, enhances administrative efficiency, and incentivizes property owners to bring their properties into compliance.

Following the Amnesty Program's initial term in 2023, the City Commission approved a resolution on July 2, 2024, extending the Program through September 30, 2025.

**Program Performance and Impact**

The Amnesty Program has had significant success since it began in 2023. As of June 3, 2025, the City has:

- Approved two hundred sixteen (216) lien amnesty applications;
- Collected \$1,552,195 from approximately \$2.3 million in approved reductions; and

- Resolved lien balances that originally totaled \$16,609,521 prior to settlement.

Based on current trends, the Amnesty Program is projected to generate between \$2.3 million and \$2.7 million by the close of Fiscal Year 2025. This demonstrates exceptional efficiency compared to the Special Magistrate lien reduction process, which generated approximately \$4.9 million in total reductions over the previous eight (8) fiscal years. The Amnesty Program achieved nearly half that total within just two (2) fiscal years, highlighting its enhanced effectiveness in a significantly shorter period.

The Amnesty Program Report for FY24 is attached as Exhibit 1, and the Amnesty Program Report for FY25 is attached as Exhibit 2.

### **Proposed Modifications: Addressing Compliance and Ensuring Equity**

To ensure effective code enforcement and maintain compliance, especially for violations impacting public health, welfare, or safety, staff is recommending adjustments to the Amnesty Program's reduction amount structure. An overly large amnesty discount for certain violations can inadvertently disincentivize property owners from promptly complying or maintaining compliance. In some cases, this is because the violation is an isolated issue that is assessed a one-time fine that is relatively less than most code enforcement violations that accrue a daily fine. In other situations, the violation may represent a significant impact to public health, welfare, or safety where a reduced amount owed to the City may not be commensurate with the severity of the violation.

Therefore, in addition to the proposed extension, staff recommends modifying the lien reduction percentage to fifty percent (50%) for properties cited for specific violation types:

- Nuisance violations (Chapter 18 of the Code of Ordinances)
- Irreparable or irreversible violations (Chapter 11 of the Code of Ordinances)
- Noise violations (Chapter 17 of the Code of Ordinances)
- Vacation rental violations (Chapter 15 of the Code of Ordinances)
- Repeat offenses (Chapter 11 of the Code of Ordinances)

These categories of violations, as defined in the City's Code of Ordinances, are often transient but have immediate and substantial impacts on surrounding residents. They frequently generate complaints, diminish quality of life, and require repeated enforcement efforts.

This proposed adjustment does not exclude property owners with these violations from participating in the Amnesty Program. Instead, it ensures that the relief offered is proportionate to the seriousness of the violation. An eighty-five percent (85%) reduction for such cases could be perceived as overly lenient, potentially encouraging repeat non-compliance by signaling that the consequences of disruptive behavior are minimal.

By setting the reduction at fifty percent (50%) for these specific violations, the City reinforces its commitment to preserving neighborhood livability, supporting equitable enforcement, and maintaining the integrity of its code compliance system. This policy

refinement aligns with community expectations and strategic goals, ensuring the Amnesty Program continues to serve as a tool for both accountability and relief.

### **Resource Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

### **Strategic Connections**

This item advances the Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We Are Community

This item supports the Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- The Neighborhood Enhancement Focus Area
- The Housing Element
- Goal 2: Be a community of strong, beautiful, and healthy neighborhood

### **Attachments**

Exhibit 1 – FY24 Lien Amnesty Program Report

Exhibit 2 – FY25 Lien Amnesty Program Report

Exhibit 3 – Resolution

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