

# **Board of County Commissioners**

## **Agenda Request**

Date of Meeting: September 2, 2008

Date Submitted: August 29, 2008

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator  
Timothy P. Barden, Assistant County Administrator

Subject: Request Board Approval to Apply for Florida Workforce Plus, National  
Emergency Grant Funding and Authorize Chairman to Execute Agreement

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### **Statement of Issue:**

This agenda item requests board approval to submit an application for grant funding from the Workforce Plus, National Emergency Grant (NEG) to provide humanitarian relief, in FEMA declared areas, to local impacted citizens and to help stimulate the county's economy through the provision of short-term employment opportunity clearing of debris on public property and lands, and to address other clean up issues related to Tropical Storm Fay.

### **Background:**

At the request of Governor Charlie Crist, the State of Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation submitted an application request to the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) for a \$20 million dollar National Emergency Grant (NEG). These funds are critical to helping provide humanitarian relief for the millions of Floridians impacted by Tropical Storm Fay and for providing immediate employment assistance to help affected citizens and to stimulate the local economies.

Ms. Kim Moore, Chief Executive Officer of WorkForce Plus held a meeting with county staff on August 29, 2008 to explain the program, provide guidelines (Attachment No.1) and sample of the agreement required from the county to receive the funds (Attachment No. 2). The USDOL has already released \$8 million to the State of Florida for immediate disbursement to affected areas. Ms. Moore is responsible for the tri-county area Wakulla, Gadsden and Leon. \$500,000 total was requested for distribution amongst this tri-county area, and the funds will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until depleted. However, if the request from the tri-county area exceeds the \$500,000 available, a request for additional funding will be made accordingly.

### **Analysis:**

The National Emergency Grants funds available to the county will help provide the following:

- 1) Community outreach to the affected county areas to provide humanitarian relief to citizens with food, water and shelter needs and referral needs to other necessary services.
- 2) Jobs for local long-term unemployed citizens to assist in the clearing of debris on public

- property and lands.
- 3) Address other clean-up issues related to Tropical Storm Fay.
  - 4) Off-set costs to the county of providing these critical debris clean-up and outreach services to citizens.
  - 5) Off-set the county's cost for coordination, implementation and oversight with WorkForce Plus for this effort, that will be on-going for an extended time-period due to Tropical Storm Fay and other anticipated storms that may still impact the county.
  - 6) Stimulate the county's economy during a critical time period.

The amount of funding to be requested is dependent upon the number of positions deemed needed to assist with the debris clean-up. The jobs will extend for a period of six-months and the pay rate is commensurate with Federal Labor Standards Act, state or local minimum wage, or comparable rates of pay for other individuals employed in similar occupations by the employer. Benefits for workers' compensation and health are permissible costs for employment (Attachment No. 2). (Attachment 3) sets out specific eligibility requirements. In the event that other storm disturbances affect the State of Florida, under the agreement with WorkForce Plus, the available funding and activities will be rolled-over to allow for pre and post preparation and assistance mitigation activities.

All related paperwork for job applicants will be handled by the WorkForce Plus Agency, including the issuance of paychecks. The county will only be responsible for time sheets and supervision. The county is not responsible for any match requirements for eligibility.

Should the Board approve the agenda item, staff has requested county departments to perform a needs assessment, should disaster relief grant funds be made available. This would allow for maximum use of funds in a timely manner.

**Options:**

1. Authorize submission of the funding request under the National Emergency Grant initiative and authorize the Chairman to execute agreement with Florida WorkForce Plus Agency.
2. Do Not Authorize submission of funding request and Do Not authorize Chairman to execute agreement with Florida WorkForce Plus Agency.
3. Board Direction.

**Recommendation:**

1. Option #1.

**Attachment(s):**

1. Agency for WorkForce Innovation Press Release dated August 22, 2008
2. Worksite Agreement
3. Eligibility Requirements