



September 8, 2010

Ms. Carla Garcia
Grant Officer
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

**Re: Wakulla County Board of Commissioners, Letter of Support for
the Hunger-Free Communities Grant**

Dear Ms. Garcia:

**BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Alan Brock
District 1

George Green
District 2

Mike Stewart
District 3

Howard W. Kessler, M.D.
District 4

Lynn Artz
District 5

Benjamin H. Pingree
County Administrator

Heather J. Encinosa
County Attorney
(850) 224-4070

The Wakulla County Board of Commissioners is proud to submit this response to the Request for Applications announcement by the Food and Nutrition Services of the United States Department of Agriculture in partnership with the National Association of Counties.

This response requests funds to implement programs in Wakulla County to assist those in need to alleviate food insecurity. This opportunity will allow county leaders to discover the barriers that may exist between people and the services that are available and initiate the necessary changes to reduce them. The grant activities will be focused on both adult and children's programming. An important aspect of the submission is that through education, Wakulla citizens will be empowered with practices to better sustain a healthy lifestyle. The hands-on interactive educational projects will enable participants to learn how to play a more direct role in building their futures.

This initiative will complement and expand an existing and active network of engaged citizens, community organizations, and quality education programs for adult and youth currently in existence in Wakulla County. The objective is to create community partnerships with local schools, the extension service and other community-based groups in food production and food preservation. Transportation systems will be investigated to learn how much of a barrier exists in obtaining services and if so, how to implement changes to erase that barrier. Expanding the food pantries both in number and in quality will be addressed while working to realize new sources of food to stock them. A marketing plan to expand citizens' awareness of services that exist will allow Wakulla County citizens to avail themselves to services provided. Children are our future and their enrollment in educational experiences will enhance their ability to learn the skills to better provide for their future.

The proposal is a collaborative effort of two county-level departments of the Board of Commissioners. These departments include the Office of Management and Budget and the Cooperative Extension (University of Florida's Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences). Both of these departments will working jointly, with the UF/IFAS Wakulla County Extension Office taking the lead to ensure proper grant implementation, management and administration. The Wakulla County Board of Commissioners met on September 7, 2010 and approved the submission of this application and the suggested activities that are county priorities included in the comprehensive plan and capital improvement five-year plan.

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I thank you for the opportunity to submit this response and ask that positive consideration be given to this critical need in our county. Should you have questions or require additional information, please contact Eva Thorpe at (850) 926-9500 or ethorpe@mywakulla.com.

Sincerely,

Howard W. Kessler, M.D.
Chairman

HWK/ses/est