

Gainesville City Commissioners  
Alachua County Commissioners  
Alachua County Sheriff  
Alachua County School Board Superintendent  
Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida

March 16, 2020

Dear Elected Leaders of Gainesville and Alachua County,

We write to thank you for your leadership during this difficult time, and to ask that you work together to protect low-income and vulnerable members of our community while the Coronavirus pandemic continues. We represent local organizations who work with people who are already marginalized in Gainesville and Alachua County in the best of times, and who are at the greatest risk of harm during the upheaval caused by the virus and the efforts to contain it. Now is the time to take steps to ensure the well-being of the folks in our community who are only one missed paycheck or public benefit payment away from losing their home or being unable to meet their family's basic needs.

To get through this we will have to look after one another, and to that end we ask that during the Coronavirus pandemic you or your designees:

- Institute a moratorium on the filing of any new eviction cases (both from rental units and evictions due to foreclosure) and impose immediate stays in any pending eviction cases. It would be deeply irresponsible to require people to choose between attending court hearings and risking contamination, or not attending and risking the loss of their home. Court systems in other communities have already taken these steps (see order from DC Courts).
- Develop a local fund for emergency rent and utility assistance to make sure that families don't fall behind during the pandemic.
- Exercise whatever local control is available to you to temporarily suspend public benefit terminations or adverse actions, including for food and housing assistance.
- Utilize all measures at your disposal to encourage employers to provide at least 14 days of paid sick leave - including for the purposes of social distancing and self-quarantining - and to continue paying employees during the crisis. Consider developing an emergency assistance fund to support local employers who are struggling to support their employees in this manner.
- Ensure that children who are eligible to utilize school lunch programs have access to meals throughout school closures.
- Extend the moratorium on utility disconnections for as long as the crisis continues.

We appreciate all that is being done already to provide support and relief during this public health emergency. We look forward to working with you further as community needs change and assistance from the federal and state government becomes more available. Thank you for all your work in service of our community.

Sincerely,

Alachua County Labor Coalition  
Community Foundation of North Central Florida  
Community Spring  
Community Weatherization Coalition  
Cultural Arts Coalition  
Dream Defenders  
Education Task Force  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Fight Toxic Prisons  
Florida Legal Services  
Gainesville Alliance for Equitable Development  
Gainesville-Area Action for Environmental Justice  
Gainesville Area NOW  
Gainesville Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee  
Gainesville Socialist Alternative  
Grace Marketplace  
Graduate Assistants United at UF  
Human Rights Coalition  
NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice  
National Women's Liberation, Gainesville Chapter  
North Central Florida Indivisible  
Open Door Ministries  
Prayers By Faith Ministries  
Project Youthbuild  
Repurpose Project  
Resilience Charter School  
River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding  
Rural Women's Health Project  
Southern Legal Counsel  
T. Mushell Cares  
United Faculty of Florida at UF  
Working Food