



September 9th, 2022

Alachua County Board of County Commissioners
12 SE 1st Street
Gainesville, FL 32601

Subject: Letter of Support for Meat Processing Facility

Dear Commissioners,

It is our pleasure to provide a letter of support and express our intent to collaborate with Alachua County on developing a Meat Processing Center. Small ranchers are experiencing bottlenecks getting meat to market as local processors are over-subscribed, and most cannot access USDA processing facilities. Existing facilities are having a hard time finding skilled employees to keep up with demand, and, at the same time, COVID-19 has increased the demand for local food across the country. USDA data shows local food sales drive agricultural job growth, increase entrepreneurship, and expand food access and choice.

Meat processing is high-skilled work, and with the combination of increased demand and efforts by our federal government and local government to expand local meat processing, there is a severe need for qualified labor. Through collaboration, Santa Fe College, UF/IFAS, CareerSource North Central Florida, and other partners can create a curriculum that will provide stepping-stones from rapid credentialing to management training and ensure we can meet the workforce needs for local processing jobs. We will also be able to fill a gap in the Southeast, where currently no such training programs are offered.

We are thrilled that developing a state-of-the-art facility will provide the needed space for production and teaching, providing hands-on learning and apprenticeship opportunities to train workers in humane and efficient processing techniques, create locally processed products, and expand value-added market opportunities. We believe this, along with other innovative collaborations in our community, are contributing to improving the lives of citizens in our local community.

We look forward to working with your staff and other community partners to craft workforce training and to help support vibrant, local food infrastructure for Alachua County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phyllis Marty".

Phyllis Marty
Chief Executive Officer
CareerSource North Central Florida
A: 1112 North Main Street, Gainesville, FL 32601
C: 352-681-3320
E: pmarty@careersourcencfl.com
W: www.careersourcencfl.com

Sponsored by CareerSource North Central Florida and the State of Florida, Department of Economic Opportunity. CareerSource North Central Florida is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.

Programs funded by CareerSource NCFL as a grantee of the U.S. Department of Labor.

A proud partner of the American Job Center Network.

1112 N. Main St., Gainesville FL 32601 | Phone (352) 955-2245
101 E. Call St., Starke, FL 32091 | Phone (904) 964-8092