



Legislation Text

File #: 150448., Version: 2

Habitat/City Partnership Potential (B)

This item is a request for the City Commission to hear a presentation from Blake Hakimian, a senior Political Science major at the University of Florida (UF), on how UF students can participate and give back to the community through a community partnership and volunteers program.

Blake Hakimian, a senior at UF, would like to work with the City of Gainesville in identifying and coordinating volunteer opportunities for students on community projects. At the City Commission meeting of October 15, Mr. Hakimian reported about a Habitat for Humanity project with which UF Students participated. At UF, Mr. Hakimian has over 500 Volunteers that can assist with projects. Mr. Hakimian would like to create a partnership that allows students to contribute to other meaningful projects within the City (See Attachment A - proposal from Mr. Hakimian).

The City of Gainesville has many opportunities for students to participate and learn about City Government. Each year, City departments (City Manager's Office, Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Administrative Services, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Regional Transit System, Gainesville Fire Rescue, Gainesville Police Department, Gainesville Regional Utilities, Equal Employment Office, and other offices) accept interns from various fields of study to work and learn about city government (see Attachment B -- Memo from Paul Folkers to the Mayor and the City Commission on Internship Opportunities with the City). Many of these students are hired for part-time jobs during the summer, and others are hired for permanent placement when such opportunities and funding are available for students. In addition, city employees participate in mentoring opportunities with the Alachua County School Board through the EEO.

The City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department (PRCA) routinely recruits volunteers to work on special projects like the Downtown Festival and Art Show, the Great Invader Raider Rally, and the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire, litter cleanup projects, and other projects throughout the year. The City of Gainesville frequently works with specific schools at UF to integrate studies with actual projects. The CRA is currently working with Habitat for Humanity on its painting program in the Eastside Redevelopment District, for which it solicits volunteers to assist homeowners in painting and upgrading their homes. Similar CRA/Habitat for Humanity volunteer opportunities are available in the Fifth Avenue/Pleasant Street and Downtown Redevelopment Districts too.

City Staff will work with the Mr. Hakimian to coordinate volunteer opportunities with city departments and community partners on projects within the City.

The cost to implement this community partnership is mainly in-kind services. The staff liaison will work with the departments and divisions to ensure that proper supervision is available to the students participating in these community projects.

The City Commission direct the City Manager to identify a staff liaison to work with Mr. Blake Hakimian to identify community projects and volunteer opportunities for students at the University of Florida as well as

other educational institutions in our area.