

Jennifer Whelihan, M.A.  
Economic Development Manager  
Hillsborough County Economic Development  
601 East Kennedy Blvd 20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tampa, FL 33602-3503

Dear Ms. Whelihan,

I am writing you in support of Edi2 funding for the “Hack Zika 2017” event, organized by the Code for Tampabay.com. Code for Tampabay is a local chapter of Code for America, an organizing force in local civic engagement, part of the national network of volunteers who contribute their time and skills toward using the internet as a platform for improving local government and community service.

In my “day job” I manage business development across the U.S. for Red Hat software, *linux* if you are familiar with it. Hillsborough County government is a significant user of our software for their mission critical servers. One theme I hear consistently from my government customers is the need for transparency with public information, also known as open data. By opening data sources such as maps, criminal incident data and transactions which contain public information, teams of volunteers “hackers” can quickly create software applications which can improve government services and benefit the community. There is a tremendous amount of cognitive surplus waiting to be tapped by working with volunteer coders.

I believe an event like Hack Zika 2017 can do well to promote openness for the county and our citizens, and get them engaged and interacting with their government. I’ve seen positive results in cities like Miami and Boston, I’d love to see Tampa take a leadership position in Florida.

Can we count on your support?

Best regards,

John Punzak  
Senior Director Business Development  
Government and Education markets  
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