

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3905

October 31, 2008

Barry Tate
Project Manager, Asset Management Office
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
South Main Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Mr. Tate:

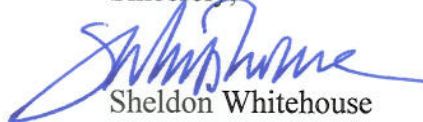
I am writing on behalf of the First Congregational Church and its effort to open a food pantry at the Franklin Mill Elder Care facility in Bristol, Rhode Island.

Thousands of Rhode Islanders are struggling to pay their mortgages, heat their homes, and afford the rising costs of healthcare and prescription drugs. Families who were once solidly middle class are slipping into poverty. The unemployment rate in Rhode Island is now the highest in the nation at a staggering 8.8 percent. During these challenging times, public assistance programs fulfill a vital service to the community. After meeting with the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, the First Congregational Church determined that they would like to use existing grant money to bring a food pantry to the East Bay to better serve the growing needs of the area.

The Franklin Mill site location was identified through the assistance of Kathy Bazinet, Executive Director of East Bay Community Development Center. It is my understanding that HUD would need to approve the use of this space and that you are currently reviewing this request. Opening a new food pantry can help ensure that more resources are readily available for those who are struggling to make ends meet.

I ask that you consider this request within the rules and regulations of your agency. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Rele Abiade in my office at 401-453-5294 or via email at rele_abiade@whitehouse.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator