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**Miami-Dade Community Action Agency to host
Florida Association for Community Action "2nd Annual Symposium on Poverty"**

Theme: "Engaging Key Partners in Addressing Poverty"

(MIAMI, September 8, 2011) – Miami-Dade Community Action Agency (CAA) will host the second annual Florida Association for Community Action's (FACA) "Symposium on Poverty" on October 6, 2011 from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Miami-Dade College, Wolfson Campus Auditorium. The event is open to the public and the community is urged to attend the symposium to be a part of the legislative process of establishing the agenda for a Florida Commission on Poverty.

The 2010 U.S. Census reported the Florida poverty rate of 15% and Miami-Dade County's poverty rate is 17.7%. According to CNN Money.com, article: Poverty in the U.S. Spikes, "The nation's poverty rate jumped to 14.3% in 2009, its highest level since 1994 and the 43.6 million Americans in need is the highest number in 51 years of record-keeping. Regionally, the South was the poorest area of the country, with a rate of 15.7%. It also experienced the biggest jump in poverty, 1.4 percentage points from 14.3 in 2008." President Obama stated after the Census Bureau released its data, "Even before the recession hit, middle class income had been stagnant and the number of people living in poverty in America was unacceptably high, and these numbers make it clear that our work is just beginning."

During last year's symposium the FACA Board of Directors committed to initiate efforts required to support the creation of a Florida Commission on Poverty. John Edwards, FACA Board Legislative Committee Chair and national board chair of the Community Action Partnership based in Washington, DC, has garnered the support of Representative Alan Williams, Florida House of Representatives, to draft the legislative bill.

"The objective of this year's symposium is to set the agenda for the Florida Commission on Poverty, and it is important to hear the concerns of the people in the community. An invitation has been extended to community leaders and we are hopeful that the community at large will attend. Our goal is to work diligently with the support of key partners to address the needs of Floridians, such as: workers trying to find jobs; families in need of adequate health care; ensuring that all

children receive a quality education and other critically essential programs and services that are provided through Florida CAA's" states, Regina M. Grace, Assistant Director, Miami-Dade CAA and FACA, Board Vice Chair.

FACA Board Chairman, William Holt states, "for the past three years Florida leads the United States in economically disadvantaged individuals and families. More than 500,000 people were newly categorized as economically disadvantaged between 2007 and 2010 which brought that total number to 2.7 million and increased the percentage from 12.1% to a staggering 14.9%. No matter how many poverty symposiums are held there will never be an organized effort or emphasis placed on the poor without the establishment of a state wide commission designed to recognize and recommend the changes needed to attack poverty in a systematic manner. FACA is championing the charge of creating this commission as a 'Moral Right' for the people of Florida."

For information about the symposium and the programs and services provided by the Miami-Dade Community Action Agency call 786-469-4600 or visit us on the web at www.miamidade.gov/caa. For information about the Florida Association for Community Action, please call 850-224-4774 or on the web at www.faca.org.

- Who:** Miami-Dade Community Action Agency and the Florida Association for Community Action
- What:** 2nd Annual Florida Association for Community Action "Symposium on Poverty" – The event is open to the public
- When:** Thursday, October 6, 2011 from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Where:** Miami-Dade College, Wolfson Campus Auditorium, 300 N.E. 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL 33132
- Why:** Navigating through these challenging times calls for the community to take aggressive action, so we intend to have our voices heard through the legislative process by creating a Florida Commission on Poverty.

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It is the policy of Miami Dade County to comply with all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The facility is accessible. For sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices or materials in accessible format, please contact David Allison at (786) 469-4682.