

HJR42 ENROLLED



1 HJR42
2 JPXBCFN-2
3 By Representatives Underwood, Harrison, Pettus
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 22-Jan-26



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1 Enrolled, An Act,

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3 COMMENDING THE CITY OF FLORENCE AND THE OFFICE OF PLANNING
4 AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ON RECEIVING THE 2026 AUDREY
5 NELSON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD.

6

7 WHEREAS, the National Community Development
8 Association has recognized the City of Florence and the
9 Office of Planning and Community Development for its
10 innovative approach to community development by awarding it
11 the 2026 Audrey Nelson Community Development Achievement
12 Award for the Literacy Gardens at the Florence-Lauderdale
13 Public Library; and

14 WHEREAS, the award honors exemplary use of Community
15 Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to improve quality of
16 life in low- to moderate-income communities; we extend
17 special commendations to Melissa Bailey, Director of
18 Planning and Community Development, for her instrumental
19 role in obtaining this award; and

20 WHEREAS, the Literacy Gardens project addresses a
21 critical community need for access to safe, flexible,
22 technology-enabled spaces for education, work, and social
23 connection; many Florence residents, particularly families
24 and individuals in low- to moderate-income households, face
25 barriers such as limited broadband access, crowded living
26 conditions, and a lack of suitable places for outdoor
27 learning or quiet study; and

28 WHEREAS, at the heart of the project are two



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29 thoughtfully designed outdoor learning spaces; together, the
30 gardens create the Shoals region's only public outdoor
31 classrooms, filling a regional service gap and redefining
32 how public space can support lifelong learning; and

33 WHEREAS, the Children's Garden functions as an
34 open-air classroom for children from birth through age 10,
35 designed with early literacy and sensory learning in mind,
36 the space hosts story times, science activities, hands-on
37 play, and family programs; the Reading Garden offers a
38 shaded, peaceful environment for teens, adults, and seniors;
39 with outdoor seating, electrical access, and public Wi-Fi,
40 the garden supports reading, studying, remote work, and
41 small group programs, extending the library's reach beyond
42 its walls; and

43 WHEREAS, the project was made possible through a
44 strategic investment of \$120,000 in CDBG funds, leveraged by
45 more than \$250,000 in private donations raised through the
46 Florence-Lauderdale Public Library Foundation and Friends of
47 the Library; local businesses, donors, volunteers, and civic
48 partners contributed funding, expertise, and hands-on
49 support, creating a true community-built asset; and

50 WHEREAS, the City of Florence's Office of Planning
51 and Community Development collaborated closely with the
52 library to ensure the project aligned with federal CDBG
53 objectives while supporting broader goals for downtown
54 vitality, digital equity, and public well-being; as a shared
55 civic resource, the gardens remain open and free to all,
56 ensuring that every resident, regardless of age, income, or



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57 background, has a welcoming place to learn, connect, and
58 grow; now therefore,

59 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
60 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we heartily congratulate the
61 City of Florence and the Office of Planning and Community
62 Development for receiving the 2026 Audrey Nelson Community
63 Development Achievement Award for its impactful Literacy
64 Gardens project, and we offer this resolution in tribute to
65 its remarkable efforts.



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Speaker of the House of Representatives

President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

House of Representatives

I hereby certify that the within Act originated in
and was passed by the House 29-Jan-26.

John Treadwell
Clerk

Senate **12-Feb-26**

Adopted