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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 1, 2014

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### **Southeastern Community & Family Services Releases Statement on Alleged Extortion of Client Services**

**Lumberton, NC – July 1, 2014** — Ms. Ericka Whitaker, CEO of Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. (SCFS), will not comment or extend one-on-one interviews with the media concerning recent sexual extortion allegations. “As previously stated, we are well-aware of this ongoing case, which has been in litigation since 2012. Since this is a super sensitive matter for all parties involved, we, as a collective body, have decided that we will not participate in a media trial of this case for the best interest of the Agency and those we serve,” stated Whitaker.

Over the last year, SCFS, through the Section 8 HUD program, has awarded 427 vouchers to clients to assist with housing in Scotland County. To remain in compliance with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), and to ensure the safety of our clients, SCFS conducts annual property inspections. If the property does not meet mandated guidelines by HUD, the Agency will, first, alert the landlord to recommend improvements, and then, abate payment if those improvements are not met. When those guidelines are not met, the Agency has to sometimes make unfavorable decisions in order to remain in compliance.

In response to the actions making headlines this week, the alleged victim in this case is an existing client of SCFS. She holds an active Section 8 HUD voucher that can be applied to any private residential property in Scotland County that meets HUD's quality standards, and that the landlord is willing to accept the fair market rent. Unfortunately, the property this client chose to reside is not in compliance with program requirements.

#### **About Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc.**

Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. is a federally funded nonprofit agency based in Lumberton, North Carolina serving low income residents in seven neighboring counties for nearly 50 years. The Agency has over 200 employees and an approximate annual budget of \$16 million utilized to operate and manage 15 Head Start schools, a weatherization program, Section 8 housing, the Community Services Block Grant program, and other services involving workforce readiness, economic development, and self-sufficiency.

To learn more about Southeastern you may visit [www.SCFSNC.org](http://www.SCFSNC.org) and follow the Agency on Facebook.

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