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Ericka J. Whitaker, CEO of Southeastern Community & Family Services, Releases Statement on the Loss of Weatherization Program Funding

Lumberton, NC – Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc.'s (SCFS) Chief Executive Officer, Ericka J. Whitaker, provided the following statement in response to the N.C. Department of Environmental and Natural Resources' (DENR) announcement of the new agency that was awarded funding to manage the Weatherization Program, formerly managed by SCFS.

Statement Issued by Ericka J. Whitaker, Chief Executive Officer

"With any agency there are highs and lows, ups and downs, and wins and losses. Today, the Agency was notified by the N.C. Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) that Southeastern Community & Family Services was not awarded funding to continue providing services under our Weatherization Program. Although Southeastern has managed the program for the last eight (8) years---last year weatherizing 80 homes through the ARRA Weatherization Project, 193 homes through the standard Weatherization Program, and installing 89 heating and/or cooling systems through the Heating Air Replacement Program---the Agency suffered several risk factors over the last few years that resulted in us having to recompete for funding, and ultimately losing funding. Those risk factors included hiring qualified program staff, but not meeting the full staffing requirements established by DENR; lack of planning and execution to service scheduled homes, and; a turnover in leadership.

Over the last eight months since my arrival, I have been assessing inputs, outputs, and outcomes of our programs; making changes where necessary, and; enforcing program policies to ensure that our clients are being served properly and that programs are operating according to regulations. Unfortunately, improvements to our Weatherization Program were not in effect at the time of the recompete process.

Although Southeastern will have to discontinue the Weatherization Program due to lack of funding, we intend to work collaboratively with Cumberland Community Action Program, Inc. by referring clients and supporting their activities to ensure a better community. Whether leading, partnering, or supporting, serving the community with programs and services that will improve the quality of lives will continue to be my focus."

About Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc.

Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc. (SCFS) 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 16 Head Start schools, Section 8 housing, and other programs involving workforce readiness, economic development, and self-sufficiency.

To learn more about SCFS you may visit www.SCFSNC.org.