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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Jill M. Morris, PR Consultant  
(910) 277-3500; [jill@jmorrispublicrelations.com](mailto:jill@jmorrispublicrelations.com)

### **Funding for Southeastern Community & Family Services' Head Start Program Continues Agency Moves Forward with Other Programs**

**Lumberton, NC** – Southeastern Community & Family Services, Inc.'s (SCFS), a Community Action Agency based in Lumberton, NC, has received notice from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that it will continue to fund the Agency's Head Start Program for the 2014-2015 program year. The annual funding amount for the program is \$11,048,865, which will continue over the next five years contingent upon an annual renewal process. The announcement by HHS to continue funding trails several program victories for the Agency this year including the Region IV Head Start Association, Inc. (RIVHSA) naming one of SCFS' teachers, Marcus Rouse, a Head Start teacher at Hoke Head Start Center in Raeford, as the 2014 Teacher of the Year. *"We are committed and passionate about setting a firm foundation for our children's education in our targeted areas, therefore we seek the best and the brightest to lead our children. We take our jobs and responsibilities quite seriously here,"* stated Tonie Brite, Head Start's Program Director, who was also honored by the North Carolina Head Start Association this year. SCFS' Head Start Program, a national program that promotes school readiness, serves 1,000 children annually in Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Hoke, Robeson, and Scotland Counties. The Head Start Program at SCFS accounts for 78 percent of the Agency's revenue and employs 188 staff to operate the program.

SCFS has also received notice from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services that funding will continue for its Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program. The CSBG Program is currently in its last program year of a five-year plan. SCFS was approved for \$807,355 to continue the program throughout the first half of the 2014-15 year, and expects to be renewed for the same amount during the second half of the year. The CSBG Program along with its Family Empowerment Self-Sufficiency (FESS) Project work with families to determine their individual and family strengths, needs, and visions for the future. This year, the CSBG Program assisted 20 families in rising above the poverty level. Participants in this program have moved from poverty to self-sufficiency, many became gainfully employed receiving medical benefits from their employer, many have completed educational or job training, and many have purchased homes. The CSBG Program serves families in Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Hoke, Pender, Robeson, and Scotland Counties. The program employs 17 case managers who provide intensive case management to clients.

In addition, SCFS will continue to serve clients through its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the program is currently in its fourth program year of a five-year plan with an annual funding amount of \$2,361,091. The program provides housing vouchers to 437 families annually, providing subsidy payments for standard rental property. SCFS'



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Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program has been providing services to Scotland County for 35 years. The program employs three full-time staff operating out of the Agency's Laurinburg office.

SCFS announced a few weeks ago that the N.C. Department of Environmental and Natural Resources' (DENR) did not award the Agency funding to continue its Weatherization Program due to several risk factors including SCFS' turnover of leadership. The termination of funding resulted in a reduction in four employees. SCFS is working to establish a partnership with the awarded agency, Cumberland Community Action Program, Inc., to assist in the transition of services. *"Last year SCFS weatherized 80 homes through the ARRA Weatherization Project, 193 homes through the standard Weatherization Program, and installed 89 heating and/or cooling systems through the Heating Replacement Program. The community relies heavily on the Weatherization Program. Our agency is committed to doing our part in ensuring the community continues to be served,"* stated Ericka J. Whitaker, Chief Executive Officer of SCFS.

#### **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. SCFS is currently the largest Community Action Agency in the State of North Carolina. The Agency has over 200 employees and an approximate annual budget of \$15 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 programs and services, and to keep up with the Agency's latest news and announcements, you may visit [www.SCFSNC.org](http://www.SCFSNC.org).

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