



FLORIDA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

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FCHR Partners With Local Organization to Seek Fair Housing Grants

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Commission on Human Relations is partnering with Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida to help obtain \$1.3 million in grant funds to help Central Florida residents overcome barriers to fair housing, including mortgage rescue scams.

The Commission (FCHR) this week sent the legal services organization letters formally committing its support for two grant applications, through the federal Fair Housing Initiatives Program. If Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida is awarded grant funds, FCHR has pledged to provide technical assistance, assist program staff with investigation and conciliation of fair housing complaints, and provide yearly training on investigating complaints of housing discrimination.

“With so many Floridians facing an uncertain housing future, we all have a stake in preventing illegal housing discrimination and scams,” said FCHR Interim Co-Director Michelle Wilson. “We’re delighted to support such an important community-based effort to ensure that everyone has equal access to the housing of their choice.”

Community Legal Services is applying to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for two grants:

- A three-year grant of \$325,000 per year to the organization’s Daytona Beach office. Using the grant funds, Community Legal Services would collaborate with local governments in Citrus, Flagler, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Putnam, Sumter and Orange counties area to target obstacles to fair housing and to assist with investigations and enforcement of fair housing complaints referred to federal authorities or other agencies.
- A one-time award of \$325,000 to the organization’s Orlando office, to look for possible discriminatory patterns in mortgage servicing. The funds would be used to receive and investigate complaints involving mortgage rescue and fair lending issues and for community outreach efforts including workshops for the public. The grant would serve residents in Orange, Osceola, Lake and Seminole counties.

FCHR, the state’s foremost anti-discrimination agency, has agreed to provide up to \$18,800 in staff services in support of the two grants over the three-year period.

FCHR works to prevent unlawful discrimination by investigating and working to resolve complaints of discrimination in the areas of housing, employment and public accommodations. In the 2010-11 fiscal year, one in five complaints investigated by the Commission was for housing discrimination.

Learn more about FCHR at <http://fchr.state.fl.us>.

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