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THE COUNTY'S MISSION:

To deliver excellent public service that enhances quality of life and addresses our community's needs now and in the future.

DIVISION INFORMATION

Community Assistance

534 West Lake Mary Blvd.
Sanford FL 32773
Phone: (407) 665-2300

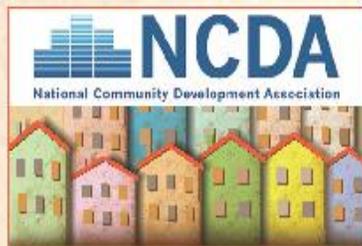
Community Development

534 West Lake Mary Blvd.
Sanford FL 32773
Phone: (407) 665-2300

Prosecution Alternatives for Youth (P.A.Y.)

Seminole County Juvenile Justice Center
190 Bush Blvd.
Sanford, FL 32773
Phone: (407) 665-5360

Front Page News



REGION IV ANNUAL TRAINING MEETING

Kentucky • Tennessee • Mississippi • Alabama • Georgia • North Carolina • South Carolina • Puerto Rico • Virgin Islands • Florida

SAVE THE DATE!

November 5 - 7, 2014

The NCDA Region IV Annual Training Meeting is coming to Seminole County "Orlando's Meeting Oasis"

Registration Rates - \$100 for NCDA members or \$125 for non-members

Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs
350 S. Northlake Blvd. • Altamonte Springs, FL 32701

Join invited speakers, HUD staff, and your fellow community development professionals from the southeastern region and take advantage of more training opportunities addressing federal housing and community development programs. Find out the latest updates and get tips on managing the CDBG and HOME Programs.

To register or for additional information:
www.seminolecountyfl.gov/comsrvs/

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



VALMARIE H. TURNER
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

The Community Services Department's Vision Statement is: ***"To perform and be recognized as one of the premier Community Services Departments in the State of Florida."*** As we start the new fiscal year, 2014/2015, we reflect on our vision statement and the milestones we have achieved over the past year with the help of our partners. We have met and/or exceeded many of the goals and objectives established in our Strategic Plan, improved processes – scanning Financial Assistance applications, and created new programs - Family Self-Sufficiency Program and Rapid Re-housing Program. We have also enhanced some of our existing programs – the Purchase Assistance and Civil Citation Programs.

The Seminole County Community Services Department is one of the premier Community Services Department in the State of Florida! The services that we provide are essential to the Seminole County Community and, again, we want to thank our partners for their continued support!

Please welcome our newest team members: Alrick Esberry and Ralston Reodica.

Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved. Mattie Stepanek

Around the Divisions

Community Assistance

Hi, my name is Steven Damron, and I live in Seminole County. I came into the Community Assistance office needing assistance for my rent and utilities due to a financial hardship. Jennifer Ortiz, Case Manager, was the lady helping me. She was very helpful and passionate about getting me the help I needed in a very fast pace. She answered all my calls and emails. I thank Jennifer and the Seminole County taxpayers for helping me greatly. Without them, I don't know what I would have done."



Veterans Services

A Day in the Life of our Veteran Services Staff:

A widow visited our office inquiring why CHAMPVA, a health insurance provider for Veterans' dependents, began denying her medical services claims years ago when she was originally approved for CHAMPVA. Our office began by making contact with the CHAMPVA office. There were numerous holds, a dropped call, and referrals from CHAMPVA, to the Tricare Retiree Health Insurance, to the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), and a referral back to CHAMPVA which took 1 hour and 45 minutes. In the final call to CHAMPVA, CHAMPVA discovered an erroneous document and entry in 2009 from another Veteran's disability record. Within minutes of the final call, CHAMPVA advised that the widow's entitlement has been restored, and the widow will be able to submit and recoup her out of pocket medical expenses for the past year. The widow was very grateful and pleased. *Success through perseverance!*

Prosecution Alternatives for Youth (P.A.Y.)

National Recognition:



(Laurie Reid and Elaine Morgan of Breaking the Cycle)

Breaking the Cycle, a program dedicated to helping families dealing with child to parent violence, was asked to present at the Georgetown University's Training Institute held in Washington, DC this past July. This initiative originated in PAY and has been designed to reflect the System of Care values by adapting a family driven and youth guided approach. Groups from other states and countries have expressed interest in replicating this program in their areas.

A Second Chance...



Twin brothers who successfully completed the PAY diversion program a year ago came back into the office to thank staff and to share their future plans. They are in ROTC and will join the military following their graduation next May. Both will be going into the Air Force Rescue Division. They expressed appreciation for the opportunity to move forward toward their goals without a criminal record.

Around the Divisions (cont.)

Teen Court Volunteer Recognition



Teen Court held a reception for its youth and adult volunteers on August 5th. Undersheriff Steve Harriett with the SCSO was the guest speaker. Teen Court in Seminole County is in its 19th year and there are currently over 250 active volunteers serving as prosecutors, defense attorneys, clerks, bailiffs, and judges on an annual basis. Youth volunteers can use the hours served toward Bright Futures and other scholarships, as well as community service graduation requirements.

Community Development



In July of 2013 Seminole County launched its revised **Purchase Assistance Program**. A new process was developed to ensure that the following objectives were met:

- Ensure funding was available for program participants;
- Shorter processing time for applications; and
- No waiting list.

Ensure funding was available for program participants

This objective was met by expanding the grants available to include both SHIP and HOME funds. By expanding the grants available for the program, there had to be a significant revamp of the policy and procedures for the Purchase Assistance Program due to the HOME guidelines being more stringent than SHIP guidelines.

Shorter processing time for applications

The previous process was taking months to complete. One of the main reasons for this is the amount of time needed to gather all necessary information from the client and third party vendors. Prospective homebuyers would submit a pre-application that included a pre-qualification letter from the lender for placement on a waiting list. The new process requires the prospective homebuyers to meet with a Certified Lender as the first step. Special Note: Lenders must complete a training to become a Certified Lender with the County's Purchase Assistance Program. The class provides information needed on the methodology for calculating income and determining eligibility.

No waiting list

In an effort to expedite the processing time and eliminate the waiting list, the Certified Lenders process the applications for the program participants and submits the completed package to the County for final approval.

The Purchase Assistance Program has been extremely successful after the aforementioned changes were implemented. The first time the Lender Certification Training was offered a large Kick-Off meeting was held with 39 lenders attending. To ensure that the Purchase Assistance Program can continue to expand the Lender's Certification Class is offered on a bi-monthly basis. Currently Seminole County has 105 certified lenders. So far, we have been able to assist 45% more clients than the previous fiscal year.