



SKYLINE C.A.P. NEWS

Contact: Kim Frye Smith
540-948-2237 X200
ksmith@skylinecap.org

FOR RELEASE

SKYLINE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM AWARDED HUD HOUSING COUNSELING GRANT

HUD funding critical to help prevent foreclosures to homeowners in Madison, Greene and Orange Counties

WASHINGTON - Hundreds of thousands of American families will have a greater opportunity to find housing or keep the homes they have because of \$50 million in housing counseling and counseling training grants announced today by U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Steve Preston.

Housing counseling grants will assist families in becoming first-time homeowners and remaining homeowners after their purchase. HUD-approved counseling agencies not only provide homeownership counseling, but also offer financial literacy training to renters and homeless individuals and families.

Skyline Community Action Program, based in Madison, Virginia was awarded \$64,000 from HUD for Comprehensive Housing Counseling services that assist homeowners with foreclosure prevention and other housing counseling services. Skyline CAP is the designated community action agency for Green, Madison and Orange Counties in Virginia.

The agency has offered housing counseling and assistance to residents since 1994, but has not always received funding from HUD. Skyline CAP's counseling program is designed to assist low income residents with information and resources to maintain and reach the most fundamental goal of safe and affordable housing. The program offers outreach and counseling to first-time homebuyers, renters, the homeless and homeowners. Counseling includes homeownership and rental assistance programs, HECM, fair housing assistance and information, money management and financial education, emergency assistance to reinstate utilities, rent delinquency or mortgage default and homebuyer education workshops.

Since 2001, HUD has increased funding to 2,300 approved housing counseling agencies by 150 percent. More than \$47 million will support 21 national and regional organizations and 376 state and local housing counseling agencies. In addition, HUD is awarding \$3 million to two national organizations to train approximately 2,600 counselors who will receive the instruction and certification necessary to effectively assist families with their housing needs.

"These critical counseling grants not only help to put people into homes, but they help to keep them there as well," said Preston. "Housing counseling organizations will continue to help families make more informed choices before they purchase a home and counsel families facing foreclosure. Now, more than ever, it is critical that Americans better understand how to manage their money, navigate the home buying process, and securing their financial future."

In addition, grantees help combat predatory lending by helping unwary borrowers avoid unreasonably high interest rates, inflated appraisals, unaffordable repayment terms, and other conditions that can result in a loss of equity, increased debt, default, and even foreclosure.

Likewise, foreclosure prevention counseling helps homeowners facing delinquency or default employ strategies, including expense reduction, negotiation with lenders and loan servicers, and loss mitigation, to avoid foreclosure. With foreclosures on the rise nationwide, these services are more important than ever.

HUD awards annual grants under the housing counseling program through a competitive process. Organizations that apply for grants must be HUD-approved and are subject to biennial performance reviews to maintain their HUD-approved status. **Skyline C.A.P.** is one of only two agencies in the immediate area receiving funding for housing counseling; Piedmont Housing Alliance, located in Charlottesville is the other. <http://www.hud.gov/news/index.cfm/>

More information about Skyline CAP housing program or other programs www.skylinecap.org

###

Skyline C.A.P. is one of 26 Community Action Agencies (CAA) operating throughout Virginia, over 1000 in the country and organized to change people's lives, embody the spirit of hope, and improve communities. CAA's are about the entire community and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. For more information on Skyline Community Action Program visit us at www.skylinecap.org or call 540-948-2237

HUD is the nation's housing agency committed to increasing homeownership, particularly among minorities; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS. The Department also promotes economic and community development, and enforces the nation's fair housing laws. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov.