

**HFA: South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority**  
**Entry Name: Employee Lunch & Learn Program**

**Educating Employees – Increasing Understanding and Communication**

**Overcoming a Common – and Often Overlooked – Challenge**

The South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority (SC State Housing), like many HFAs, consists of numerous divisions, each focused on a particular program or objective. SC State Housing now has nine functional program areas. Often, our organization struggles with ensuring its employees understand the premise of each division; thus, resulting in less communication and insufficient cross-functional support, often referred to as the “silo effect.”

During a recent SC State Housing strategic planning session, senior and executive staff members developed a list of goals and objectives aimed at improving internal communications and division-to-division support. As a result, SC State Housing created the Employee Lunch & Learn Program – an innovative approach to educating employees in order to accomplish these goals and objectives.

**The Program**

Through the Employee Lunch & Learn Program, SC State Housing employees can experience, first-hand, the objectives of other divisions. SC State Housing held one Employee Lunch & Learn session this year and plans to hold one per quarter.

The program takes employees on local, educational tours of sites that expose them to the objectives of other divisions. For example, the first session took SC State Housing employees to view local homes and housing units that were created as a result of programs offered through the agency’s Development Division, which includes affordable housing assistance programs such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and HOME.

This program could easily be replicated by another organization with the same or similar challenges.

**Staff Participation**

Though attendance is voluntary, all staff are invited and encouraged to participate. Invitations are sent weeks in advance via SC State Housing’s “E-News” internal, electronic newsletter. Posters are also placed in break rooms and other high-traffic areas around the building. Participants reserve their attendance by e-mail to a member of the committee. For those who choose to participate, lunch hours are “flexible” to allow for possible delays.

**Free & Effective Training**

The Employee Lunch & Learn Program is operated at no cost to SC State Housing. The program is offered during employee lunch hours and solely utilizes agency transportation resources. Agency staff members from respective divisions will act as guides during the sessions. Transportation is provided with fleet vehicles. No outside resources are utilized for this program.

### **Improvement in Agency Operations**

The initial Employee Lunch & Learn session created a better understanding of the programs offered through the Development Division, thus allowing for better communication and collaboration between departments. For example, creating a better understanding of the division's duties has allowed the Marketing & Communications Division to more adequately create collateral and press releases for the division.

### **Overcoming Challenges**

The Employee Lunch & Learn Program is an innovative solution created by SC State Housing management that will allow the agency to accomplish the goals and objectives set at its recent strategic planning session. The program will efficiently and effectively improve operations in an innovative and motivational manner.



# E-News

South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority

E-News is the internal newsletter of the  
South Carolina State Housing  
Finance and Development Authority  
May 2, 2011

*There are still seats left. Contact Willie Franks TODAY!*

## Mark your calendars for **Lunch & Learn**

**First One: May 6**



Limited space is available on a first come, first served basis  
to the first 11 registered. More events will follow.

### Learn More About What SC State Housing Does

Starting on May 6th, SC State Housing employees will have the opportunity to visit local sites where agency monies have been utilized. Just bring your lunch; transportation will be provided. The first session will cover Low Income Housing Tax Credits, HOME and NSP properties. This is a great opportunity for everyone to learn more about other departments and the contributions they make to the agency mission. Contact [Willie Franks](#) to reserve your seat.





Pebble Creek Senior Living Facility (HOME & Tax Credit Funds)



Companion at Oak Forest and Summer Cove Multifamily (HOME Funds)



NSP Rehab House