

Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) Grant

The Equal Greenville Housing Opportunities (EGHO) Program began April 1, 2003 with \$85,936 in funding provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) grant. This program focuses on: outreach to affected populations (including minorities and immigrants), education and outreach to the general public, and promoting the understanding that fair housing is everyone's business. The EGHO Program began with four main components, which included a literature and poster campaign, the development of a workshop series to teach service providers about fair housing, the creation of a fair housing children's coloring book, and partnerships with local community-based organization Within Reach and faith-based organization Catholic Charities to provide education and outreach to the African-American and Hispanic populations.

During the Human Relation Commission's first year of funding under this grant, much progress was made toward educating the greater Greenville community about Fair Housing. A bi-lingual Fair Housing Program Coordinator was hired, and Human Relations sub-contracted with an employee at Catholic Charities to carry out outreach activities.

A local artist, Lynn Greer, provided her artistic talents to create a Fair Housing poster to be used throughout Greenville County. This bi-lingual poster features a scene inspired by the Viola Street community, in which homeowners of multiple races, ethnicities, and abilities are enjoying each other's company and taking care of the community. The poster reads: "We can all live the American Dream; Fair Housing is for Everyone," and encourages victims of discrimination in housing to contact the Human Relations Commission. Over 1,000 copies of this poster were recreated, and Human Relations staff and partner agencies are diligently distributing these posters throughout Greenville County for display. Multiple other Fair Housing Materials, including pamphlets and brochures (in English and Spanish) were distributed across the community.

Furthermore, on April 20, 2004, the Greenville County Human Relations Commission will hold its third annual **Fair Housing Month Luncheon & Symposium** in conjunction with the Greater Greenville Association of Realtors on Tuesday, April 20th from 11:00 – 1:30. The event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, and approximately eighty individuals are expected to attend. The targeted audience includes social service providers, non-profit and government housing providers, property managers, and realtors. At the symposium, four speakers will discuss various facets of fair housing: Ms. Pat Green (HUD-Columbia, SC) will discuss Fair Housing law, Ms. Judy Wolk will discuss Fair Housing and Property Management, a Consumer Affairs representative will discuss Predatory Lending and High Cost Lending, and affordable homeownership opportunities and Fair Housing as it relates to seniors and persons with disabilities (speaker to be determined) will also be addressed.