Government and Community Services (GCS) is a proactive outreach arm of the County. GCS focuses on facilitating improved community outreach, administration of government services, and the resolution of community issues. GCS recognizes an "Organization of the Month" that exemplifies the importance of supporting the community and assisting in getting resources to those most in need.

This month, GCS recognizes Richland Library and their amazing determination to connect with and serve communities during this pandemic: from tele-town halls, inspiring art, online storytime, the "Let's Talk Race" series, COVID-19 testing sites and everything in-between.

On March 16, 2020, Richland Library made the unprecedented decision to close their buildings in the interest of public safety, but they never stopped serving the public. Their Social Work Department has tended to the personal needs of more than 700 households over the last year with a goal of distributing fair and impartial information on social issues, such as food stamps, health coverage, transportation and affordable housing, to those in the community who need it most and providing personalized services on a case-by-case basis.

In recent months, the library's Social Work Department has turned its attention to the growing need around assistance with rent and utilities. In particular, it has developed partnerships with Richland County Government on the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) on a housing navigator pilot program to help local residents fill out and submit applications. Furthermore, they have received a $25,000 grant from the United Way of the Midlands to address emergency housing and utility payments throughout Richland County.

Local residents can connect with the library's Social Work Department by:
- scheduling in-person appointments at Richland Library Main
- calling 803-509-8371
- texting 803-386-8606
- emailing socialworker@richlandlibrary.com

Outdoor laptop use is available upon request at 11 library locations – with the exception of Richland Library Main and Sandhills – and indoor computer use is available at eight library locations (Richland Library Ballentine; Eastover; Main; North Main; Northeast; Sandhills; Southeast and St. Andrews). Local residents can access the equipment for one hour on a first-come, first-served basis. Appointments are not required.

In addition, public Wi-Fi access is available in the parking lots of 12 library locations – with the exception of Richland Library Sandhills – and Wi-Fi hotspots are available in the library's collection. Local residents can check out the devices by calling 803-569-3563 or emailing hotspot@richlandlibrary.com.

There are translation services available as well for the Hispanic/LatinX community. For assistance, call 803-799-9084 and press "seven" on the keypad to leave a message. A library staff member will call back, responding to any inquiries in Spanish and providing vital information.

The library continues to provide other select services from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 2 - 6 p.m., Monday - Saturday at all 13 locations. For the latest updates and safety protocols, call 803-799-9084, visit richlandlibrary.com or follow them on social media.