



GCS recognizes Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina as its “Organization of the Month”

Government and Community Services in 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. For the month of March, GCS is recognizing Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina. Even though Sisters of Charity is a state-wide organization, they provide vital support to Richland County communities. The Sisters of Charity Foundation is a ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System. Since 1996, the Foundation has focused on addressing the root causes and impacts of poverty in South Carolina. Sisters of Charity use their resources in collaborating with others within the philanthropic sector to reduce poverty through action, advocacy and leadership.

The recent South Carolina Poverty Study completed by Sisters of Charity was conducted by partnering with the Rural & Minority Health Research Center at the University of South Carolina. The findings reveal that structural barriers are continuing systemic poverty in the state. Furthermore, the data indicates a person’s racial or ethnic identity, gender, and where they are born present significant barriers to economic self-sufficiency.

Research findings include that South Carolina ranks *higher* than the national average in:

- **The number of people living in poverty**
- **Eviction rates (Columbia is in the Top 10 for highest evictions in the US)**
- **The amount of money families spend on housing and transportation costs.**

Also, South Carolina ranks *lower* than the national average when it comes to...

- **The number of people who have health insurance**
- **The amount of money spent per student on education**
- **The number of female and/or minority-led businesses**

For more information, review the recent news reports on the study as well as a link below to view the full study, including a webinar where the findings were presented to the public:

News stories: https://www.counton2.com/news/latest-news/local-charity-working-to-end-poverty-in-south-carolina/?fbclid=IwAR2pVIA1a1MugNaAx0ljAYCQHndqo4XBEidBzMhYg0fR_L9Oe3Qomlpquww and https://www.postandcourier.com/features/poverty-by-design-study-by-sc-nonprofit-examines-disparities-in-palmetto-state/article_4f47a932-60c2-11eb-aa93-03f571ec534c.html

Study: <https://sistersofcharitysc.com/advocacy/scpovertystudy-2/>

Sisters of Charity is hopeful this research will lead to needed change in communities across the state. One of the strategies moving forward is to build a strong network of people with lived experiences to share their stories and experiences. Sisters of Charity will continue to advocate for policies that address poverty.

GCS wants residents in Richland County with a story to share to join this movement towards a more equitable South Carolina. If you have a story or issues that you would like to share, please reach out to Chynna Phillips cphillips@sistersofcharitysc.com or Kimberly Humphrey at humphrey.kimberly@richlandcountysc.gov for more information.