

**North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
2009 Local Government Federal Credit Union Employee Productivity Awards Application**

County: Cleveland **Employee:** Linda Wiggins **Email:** Tax.collections@clevelandcounty.com

County Department: Tax Administration **Employee Title:** Tax Collector

County Phone: 704-484-4918 **County Mailing Address:** P O Box 370 Shelby, N C 28151

Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees? **NO** **YES**

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees in Number 6. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member.

Fair Labors Standards Act Designation: In order for your project to be eligible, you MUST indicate one of the following. If you do not know, please contact your personnel director.

EXEMPT: **NON-EXEMPT:** **BOTH (if applicable to a team):**

1.	Productivity Improvement Title:	In Rem Foreclosures
2.	Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008):	August 2008
3.	Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)	
Kimberly Mullinax was hired in August, 2008 to fill a new Paralegal position created by the County to aid in the collection of delinquent taxes by use of In Rem Foreclosure. During 2008 Kimberly and I created procedures for this process that covers each step from an initial contact letter, visiting the property, sending the required legal notices, preparing publications, docketing judgments, working collaboratively with the Clerk and Sheriff Offices, working with the new buyer to finalize the recording of transfer documents and the application of funds to satisfy the outstanding tax lien.		
In the first five months on the job Kimberly was in contact with one hundred and sixty eight parcel owners and worked with them to collect an excess of \$156,000 by the end of December, 2008. All of this was done without the sale of any property at public auction. All property owners satisfied the lien and maintained ownership of property. To date, less than fifteen judgments have been docketed, an excess of an additional two hundred property owners have been contacted in 2009 with only one property being sold at public auction and a total of \$392,000 has been collected by the use of In Rem Foreclosure since its inception in Cleveland County.		

4. Please describe why this project was initiated or what problem it addressed:

The Paralegal position was created to aid in the collection of delinquent taxes. The County needed a way to collect taxes when all other collection remedies fail. Other such remedies are bank attachments, garnishment of wages, the NC Debt Setoff Program and mortgage style foreclosure. Cleveland County has numerous delinquent accounts with previously only one person designated to complete foreclosure work. This position allows for a full time person to process these accounts. By using In Rem Foreclosure properties are processed and sold more quickly than those in mortgage style foreclosure. In addition, In Rem allows for greater ease in the foreclosure of properties owned by heirs or unknown parties. This position has created a new collection method, allows for collection of delinquent taxes on properties where foreclosure is the only solution and it reduces the amount of time taxes remaining outstanding.

5. Please quantify the improvement's results in terms of cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of services provided.

(Please indicate what resources were used to achieve your results, and what was done with the time savings, if any accrued).

The initial collection goal for this position was \$100,000 by the end of December, 2008. This goal was accomplished in October. By the use of an In House Paralegal all time is focused on assigned cases and the fees associated with the sale of real property are reduced. The amount collected during the five month period in 2008 is five times greater than the amount collected during the entire year of 2008 with Mortgage Style Foreclosure. In addition, the County spends fewer dollars pre-sale than with mortgage style foreclosure. No attorney fees are added with In Rem and Kimberly was able to negotiate our publication rate with the local newspaper and as a result cut our publication cost in half. These reduced expenses allow for properties to be sold at a lesser cost to the public and helps generate a greater interest in the purchase of tax foreclosed property. Along with this program, Kimberly helped establish Procedures to sell any properties that the County might have on their books that were acquired thru earlier foreclosures. Since Kimberly has been hired, we have been able to sell eleven County owned properties, thereby relieving the County of these properties and putting them back on the tax books as revenue for the County.

6. Please provide any other descriptive information you would like to be considered by the review committee.

Team Member not listed above: Kimberly Mullinax – Paralegal/Tax Collections (non-exempt) Phone 704-476-3089

County Manager's Name:	David Dear	Supervisor's Name:	Chris Green
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Return by June 19, 2009 via email to ncacc@ncacc.org.