

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

What is the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program?

FSS is a voluntary program open to all Section 8 participants which assists families in obtaining the skills that they need to achieve financial independence. Clients are assisted “in-house” by the FSS Program Coordinator and are also referred to other community agencies where clients access services such as case management, education, job training, counseling, job search assistance, financial aid assistance, workshops, support meetings, and other appropriate services to assist the family.

How does the program work?

1. All FSS participants must currently be a participant in the KMHA Section 8 rental assistance program in order to be eligible to participate.
2. The KMHA FSS Coordinator assists the families with accessing the local agency services which the family needs in order to develop the skills to become self-sufficient. The coordinator will discuss the family’s immediate and long term goals as well as the expectations of the program. Then, the coordinator and family will develop a strategy for achieving self-sufficiency and formulate an Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP) which lists the families goals and objectives.
3. The ITSP is then incorporated into a formal FSS Contract of Participation which is signed by both the family and the Housing Authority.

What are the benefits of the program?

1. The FSS Program Coordinator works closely with several area service agencies and local educational and training facilities and can greatly assist clients in identifying and accessing the programs and services they need to achieve higher paying jobs and ultimately become self-sufficient.
2. A major component of the FSS Program is that clients have the ability to establish an Escrow (Savings) Account when the family increases their earned income while they are participating in the FSS Program.
3. The FSS Coordinator will help clients in resume preparation and finding job leads while they seek employment. For those individuals seeking further training or college enrollment, assistance with obtaining financial aid will be provided.

What is the FSS Contract of Participation?

The contract describes the resources and appropriate supportive services which will be made available to the family under the FSS Contract. The contract describes the objectives which need to be completed by the family. It includes the rights and responsibilities of the FSS family and KMHA.

By signing the FSS Contract of Participation, the family agrees to fulfill the obligations to which it has committed itself, no later than five (5) years after entering into the contract. It requires the head of the household to seek and maintain suitable employment throughout the term of the contract. In cases where individuals enroll in vocational

training or college, they will be required to obtain employment upon graduation in order to complete the FSS Contract.

How does the Escrow account work?

When a participating family becomes employed when they previously were not; or when the family starts out in the program having employment income and then increases that income while participating in FSS, an escrow account is then established for the family. A part of the increase in the family's portion of rent due to an increase in earned income will be credited to the FSS escrow in accordance with HUD regulations. The family will be given an initial letter telling them when the escrow credit will start and what the amount of the credit will be. Also, the family will be given an annual escrow report each December which details the activity in the escrow account for the year.

The escrow account funds are kept and maintained by the housing authority. FSS clients can only obtain Escrow funds upon the successful completion of the FSS Contract of Participation.

In what circumstances will my FSS Contract terminate?

The FSS Contract of Participation will terminate for the following reasons:- Completion of the goals and objectives listed in the contract

- Achievement of self-sufficiency by having family income exceed the designated payment standard for the bedroom size unit for which they qualify
- Expiration of the contract and any requested extensions
- Failure of the FSS client to honor the terms of the contract
- By any other act that is inconsistent with the purpose of the FSS Program such as being terminated from the Section 8 rental assistance program

Can I continue to receive rental assistance after termination from the FSS Program?

Yes, if the family is unable to become self-sufficient by the end of the term of the contract, and any subsequent contract extensions, the family will retain its current Section 8 subsidy but will no longer be considered an FSS participant. The family will forfeit the rights to any accumulated escrow funds upon termination from the FSS Program. However, forfeiture of escrow funds will not affect the amount of rental subsidy available to the family.

HUD Link:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/fss.cfm>