

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

What is it?

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program works with support agencies throughout Massachusetts to help families develop strengths, skills, and experiences necessary to achieve economic independence. The FSS program is a team effort involving your family, the FSS Coordinator, and the various service agencies that will assist you on your journey towards a more self-sufficient and fulfilling life.

This program does not affect your standing in Federal Public Housing or Section 8. By being in these programs, it merely allows you to participate in the FSS program.

Who qualifies?

Only Federal Public Housing tenants or Section 8 Voucher holders that are in good standing with the housing authority can participate in this program.

What are the benefits?

The FSS program allows participants to take advantage of schooling, financial counseling, training, and to gain work experience, while receiving housing assistance. The FSS Coordinator works with each family to develop a plan to learn the skills that will lead to better employment, education, and financial standing in order to become more independent. The FSS Coordinator will do this by connecting you with various services for your specific needs.

In addition to having access to these services, the CHA will set aside money in an **escrow account** for employed FSS participants who begin to pay a larger portion of their rent due to an increase in their earned income. Successful FSS graduates have used their escrow funds to purchase a home, a car, pay off debt, or to continue their education.

The Process

1. Meet with the FSS Coordinator
2. Sign a five-year Contract of Participation and set several goals for your action plan
3. Work towards your chosen goals, report on your status, and meet with your FSS Coordinator on a quarterly basis
4. Graduate from program and receive funds from escrow

Graduation

Once you have completed your set goals and have been off of government assistance (TANF, Food Stamps) 12 months prior of your graduation/end of contract date, you will have successfully completed the FSS program and receive your escrow funds that you have accumulated over the years. If you need more time to complete your set goals, then you may be approved for an extension for up to two years. **If you graduate from the FSS program, you can still remain in Federal Public Housing or keep your Section 8 Voucher. You do not have to give up your housing/voucher.**

For more information, please contact:

Section 8: Heather Birchall (617) 884-5617 Ext. 29 hbirchall@chelseaha.com

Public Housing: Monica Fuentes (617) 884-5617 Ext. 25 mfuentes@chelseaha.com