

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

Quick Look: The Family Self-Sufficiency Program is a special work incentive designed to promote employment and to increase savings for families receiving Section 8 tenant-based assistance, living in public housing, or for those living in housing provided through the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act.

If you receive assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher program or public housing, you may be eligible for the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program and could receive services that may include:

- Childcare assistance
- Transportation
- Education
- Job training and employment counseling
- Substance/alcohol abuse treatment or counseling
- Household skill training
- Homeownership counseling

How It Works

With your local Housing Authority or Public Housing Agency, you may enter a service plan and a contract that measures your family's progress toward self-sufficiency (defined as independence from public housing subsidies and welfare assistance). The head of the family must agree to seek and maintain suitable employment through the terms of the FSS contract. Successful completion of the FSS program occurs when all your family's agreed-upon self-sufficiency objectives are met, or when 30 percent of your family's adjusted monthly income equals or exceeds the fair market rent for the family's housing unit.

The two main components of an FSS program are **case management** and **the FSS escrow account**. You will be provided with a case manager and with opportunities for education, job training, and counseling, together with services such as childcare and transportation assistance.

As an additional incentive, the Housing Authority or Public Housing Agency will deposit funds into an FSS escrow account. This provides you with reimbursement for some or all the rental increases associated with increased income if your family complies with program rules.

The amount of the contribution depends on your family's original income level. FSS account contributions must be made at least annually.

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When the FSS program is successfully completed, you will be given the full amount in the escrow account. Your family will receive no funds if the program is not successfully completed. There is no limit to the amount that you may accumulate in the FSS account.

The housing authority stops contributing to the account once the FSS contract of participation is completed or terminated. Additionally, the Housing Authority or Public Housing Agency may elect to disburse funds from the FSS account if a participating family has fulfilled its interim goals and needs a portion of the FSS account funds to pay for education, work-related expenses, or for other purposes related to the goals of the family's FSS contract.

For more information or to see if this work incentive is helpful to you, contact your local Housing Authority.

Source: www.ssa.gov. Reviewed by the Center on Community Living and Careers.

**For more information, contact the
Indiana Benefits Information Network**
812-855-6508 | www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc

Indiana's Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program
North/Central: 855-641-8382 | Southern: 502-548-4492