BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY (FSS)

1. WHAT IS THE FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM?

- The Family Self Sufficiency Program is an opportunity available to families with Section 8 assistance to develop long range plans to help them achieve financial security and educational goals. For example, it can help with savings for homeownership or college.

2. HOW DOES THE FSS PROGRAM WORK?

- The head of the household meets with an FSS Coordinator to develop a five year plan that identifies the participant's employment or educational goals and outlines the steps and services appropriate to achieve these goals. The service plan is part of the five year contract that the head of household enters with the Boston Housing Authority (BHA). The FSS Contract, like all contracts, is an agreement between parties that delineates the rights and responsibilities of each.

- The FSS Coordinator will serve as the Leasing Officer during the five year contract in order to monitor progress and to make referrals for services as needed. A family may change its goals during the contract and revise the plan as necessary to achieve the agreed upon goals.

3. WHAT IS THE FSS ESCROW ACCOUNT?

- Like all Section 8 families, those participating in the FSS Program pay a greater share of the rent as their income increases. For many FSS families, when their earned income increases, some of the increase is matched and deposited into a special savings account by the BHA. Upon successful completion of the FSS contract, the funds in the escrow account are paid to the head of the family.

4. WILL I LOSE MY SECTION 8 SUBSIDY IF I AM IN FSS?

- Participation in the FSS program is voluntary and does not affect your eligibility for Section 8 assistance. You can continue to receive Section 8 rental assistance after completion of your FSS Contract as long as you remain otherwise eligible for the program. Participants must remain in compliance with all Section 8 requirements while enrolled in the FSS Program.

5. DO I HAVE TO STAY IN THE SAME APARTMENT FOR THE FIVE YEARS?

- FSS participants have most of the same mobility options as all tenant-based Section 8 participants. Participants must remain in an apartment for the first twelve months of any new lease, but may then move to another apartment. In limited circumstances, FSS participation can be transferred to another city or town or even another state.

6. I ALREADY WORK, HOW CAN FSS HELP ME?

- The FSS Program offers case management to identify and achieve goals such as financial stability and homeownership. The escrow account can help you save money for these or other goals.

7. HOW IS FSS CONNECTED TO THE SECTION 8 HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM?

- In order to participate in the BHA's Section 8 Homeownership Program, given the high cost of homeownership, most people must participate in the FSS Program for at least a year so as to prepare for the long term costs of homeownership.

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