

FSS Program Update

The Public Housing Family Self-Sufficiency Program began in the summer of 2005 and can serve up to 50 individuals.

The objective of the FSS Program is to help motivated families move toward self-sufficiency. The process involves a five year contract between the head-of-household and Charleston-Kanawha Housing in which the individual states their goals and activities for achieving self-sufficiency. Once the contract is signed, the FSS Coordinator can work with any member of the household toward self-sufficiency goals such as:

- Free Counseling Services
- Free GED Classes
- Improve Credit
- Obtain Job Training
- Assist with College Enrollment
- Improve Employment Status
- Obtain Child Care, etc.
- Homeownership Counseling
- Provide Links to Various Social Services

FSS participants will establish an escrow account once their income increases. The difference in their rent increase is placed into an account that is available to the participant upon successful completion of the program.

FSS participants may also choose to establish an Individual Development Account, IDA, which receives a dollar for dollar match from Charleston-Kanawha Housing up to \$1,500. The IDA can only be used for homeownership, education/training or starting a business.

Charleston-Kanawha Housing has partnered with Family Service and the Religious Coalition for Community Renewal to provide counseling services for participants.

If you would like to find out more about signing up for the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, contact Amy Lewis, FSS Coordinator at 304-348-6451 ext. 307 or by e-mail at alewis@charlestonhousing.com.

Amy Lewis,
FSS Coordinator



Participant Success Stories

Greg Wall has been on the FSS program since April 2006. He set goals for himself and has accomplished several of them receiving his GED which earned him a \$500 bonus from the Department of Health and Human Resources. Greg completed training through PIA Career Services and is now employed full-time with Werner Enterprises.



Mr. Wall has now established an escrow account and is hoping to one day purchase a home for his family.



FSS participant Damita Green began the public housing FSS Program in December 2005. She set a goal to attend school to become a phlebotomist, attended Garnet Career Center, achieved her goal and began working at CAMC in May 2006.

Damita is well on her way to achieving self-sufficiency.



Pictured above are graduates from the Personal Care Attendant Training that was offered at the Shoenbaum Family Enrichment Center for three weeks in June, 2007. Amy Lewis, FSS Coordinator, helped recruit attendees for the training and Charleston-Kanawha Housing had four successful graduates. From left: Terri Spencer, Orchard Manor; Barbara Dye, Littlepage Terrace; Teresa Hunter; Natasha Neblett, Orchard Manor; Rodney Willis; Aminata Lowalli, South Park; Mary Townsend; Bonnie Dornsife and Catherine Rutherford, Instructor.

Participant Success Stories



Marie Foster started the program in August 2006. While on the program, she became employed and established a positive escrow account. Ms. Foster reached the goal of becoming free from all assistance, moved into a new tax credit unit in January, 2008 and received her escrow check. Pictured above is from left: Amy Lewis, FSS Coordinator, Marie Foster and Marva Williams, Director of Client Services.



Felicia Lopez began the FSS program in February, 2006. Ms. Lopez is attending West Virginia State University and is a 4.0 student. She is employed full-time with ResCare and reached the goal of becoming free from all assistance. Ms. Lopez came off of the FSS program after accepting a new tax credit unit in January 2008. "The FSS program and my new apartment have been a positive change for me and my children." Pictured above: Felicia Lopez & her son with Amy Lewis, FSS Coordinator.

Kimberly Witcher began the FSS program in February 2006. Ms. Witcher became employed at the Department of Health and Human Resources as an Information Desk Attendant. Ms. Witcher also achieved the goal of becoming free from welfare assistance and came off of the program after receiving her new tax credit unit in January 2008.



Kathryn Kessell, resident of Littlepage Terrace, was awarded the 2006 Jennings Randolph Scholarship from the West Virginia Association of Housing Agencies. The award is a \$1,000 per year scholarship that may be renewed each year up to four years. Ms. Kessell is pictured above with Charleston Housing Executive Director Mark Taylor following the awards presentation on April 26, 2006 at the Ramada Plaza Hotel in South Charleston. Kathryn is pursuing a degree in Social Work at West Virginia State University.



Donnie Kessell, a resident of Charleston-Kanawha Housing and a sophomore at West Virginia

State University pursuing a degree in Social Work will also receive a SERC-NAHRO scholarship. Mr. Kessell is actively involved in student life as Chair of NYANSA (an African word meaning learn wisdom), which is a student organization with numerous volunteer outreach efforts. Mr. Kessell also serves as the Chair of Pinnacle, a non-traditional student group that promotes



FSS Participants, Donnie & Kathryn Kessell completed an internship at CKHA in 2008 working with the Family Self-Sufficiency and Good Housekeeping Programs. They will graduate from West Virginia State University with Social Work Degrees.