

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



Office of Public Housing

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May 13, 2014

Mr. Frank Alexander
Executive Director
Boulder County Housing Authority
3482 N. Broadway
Boulder, CO 80306

Dear Mr. Alexander:

This is in response to Boulder County Housing Authority's (BCHA) electronic mail (email) sent February 19, 2014, and subsequent email dated April 29, 2014, to request review and approval of BCHA's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Action Plan revised February 10, 2014. The Denver Office of Public Housing reviewed BCHA's FSS Action Plan, and determined it complies with the requirements and is approved.

BCHA has no mandatory minimum program size requirement for the FSS Program; BCHA's FSS program is voluntary. BCHA proposes an increase of 24 FSS participant families in its program size, for a total of 136 participant families. BCHA's FSS Action Plan for the administration of an FSS program of 136 slots is approved.

No further approval of BCHA's FSS Action Plan is required unless BCHA proposes to make policy changes or increase the size of its voluntary program.

If we may be of further assistance, please contact Karen Noakes, Public Housing Revitalization Specialist, at (303) 672-5319.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Roman".

Ann Roman
Director
Office of Public Housing

BOULDER COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

ACTION PLAN

Revised February 10, 2014

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1. Boulder County Housing Authority **Family Self-Sufficiency Program Overview**

The Boulder County Housing Authority (BCHA) Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is a 5-year academic, employment and savings incentive program designed to help low income families, who have rental assistance (Section 8 or Project Based Voucher) or reside in public housing, gain job training and education to improve their family's financial situation and move toward self-sufficiency.

BCHA's FSS program was created in 1984 as part of a federal HUD pilot program (Project Self-Sufficiency) that offered eligible low-income families the opportunity to receive a wide array of coordinated services designed to help them attain economic independence.

The FSS program helps participants set job training and educational goals that will lead to better employment opportunities. According to DeVol (2006), "Poverty traps people in the tyranny of the moment, making it very difficult to attend to ...plans for the future-the very things needed to build adequate resources and financial assets." In order to provide participants with the support they need to improve financial burdens, FSS helps participants access: Childcare Assistance, Financial Aid, Transportation, First-time Home-buying, and Emergency Financial Help for rent, utilities, and child care. FSS combines rental assistance, and the coordination of services to help participating households achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The educational goals of FSS participants are set and attained through the combination of financial assistance, case management, referral and linkage to community agencies that help with: Academic Advising, Career Counseling, and Volunteer Opportunities. Once education has been attained, case managers facilitate job search and job preparedness, and refer to other agencies that assist in this process.

Participants receive personal support and tailored guidance through their work with the FSS case managers. Case managers assist in the creation of a holistic life plan that can lead participants to a more desirable life style. Case managers address family, health, personal, financial and educational challenges that are key areas to troubleshoot while on the path to goal achievement. Case managers refer clients to Parenting Classes and Professional Counseling services that can aid them in their process toward

attaining self-sufficiency. Participants are also required to attend a variety of life skills classes such as: Financial Stability/Financial Foundations, Love and Logic (parenting) and a Goals to Value class which aim to improve skills in the areas of budgeting, debt management, healthy relationships, parenting and setting SMART goals. FSS participants are encouraged to become involved with a variety of support networks and actively participate in community groups or in other activities in which they have an interest, such as, the Bridges Out of Poverty Circles Campaign, Blue Prints class or P.E.R.L. (People Engaged in Raising Leaders) training.

HUD defines **self-sufficiency** as meaning that “an FSS family is no longer receiving Section 8, public housing or Indian housing assistance, or any Federal, State, or local rent or homeownership subsidies or welfare assistance. Achievement of self-sufficiency, although an FSS program objective, is not a condition for receipt of the FSS account funds.”

As defined in the FSS Contract of Participation and for the purposes of the BCHA FSS program, “Self-Sufficiency” is defined as: maintaining suitable employment after the completion of a job training and/or academic program, being free of TANF for the last 12 months of FSS program enrollment, and moving toward the ultimate goal of being free of a housing subsidy.

By BCHA FSS program standards, it is expected that each BCHA FSS participant will progress during their tenure with FSS to a status of Stable, Secure or Thriving on the **Boulder County Self-Sufficiency Matrix** (attached). The Self-Sufficiency Matrix (SSM) was revised to allow for more consistency between Boulder County programs that utilize this measurement tool. The new Matrix has 21 domains and some of the following areas are examples of domains in the SSM:

- Increased Job Skills and Established Work History
- Achieved Adult and Child Educational Progress
- Assess Functional Ability to determine ability of perform Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- Assess Household’s ability to obtain appropriate Food
- Established Budgeting and Financial Skills: prioritizing and supporting expenses
- Solidified Transportation Arrangements
- Solidified Child Care Arrangements

2. Family Demographics

For the 2013 year, the Family Self-Sufficiency program actively managed 138 households. It is our expectation that for the 2014 year, the BCHA FSS program will expand their program by 24 new households. The reason for this increase in FSS households is BCHA is building a new housing site in Lafayette, CO called Aspinwall. Aspinwall is to start leasing up in April of 2014 and BCHA has designated 24 of those units for the FSS program. HUD has funded the BCHA FSS program for 3 FSS positions which is based on having the PHA serve at least 125 families. The FSS families that participate in the BCHA program are primarily Caucasian, non-Hispanic, female-headed households. The majority of participants are going to school and/or working and have an average of one and half (1.5) children per family. The caseload demographics as of January 2014 are:

Ethnicity	Ethnicity	Gender	Number of Children
Caucasian: 60%	Hispanic: 26%	Male: 9%	One: 58%
African-American: 7%	Non-Hispanic: 65%	Female: 91%	Two: 26 %
Bi-/Multi-Racial: 4%			Three: 8%
Asian: 3%			Four: 5%
Native American: 2%			None:3%
Other:15%			
Unreported: 9%			

Families enrolled in the FSS program typically identify the following **supportive service needs** in order to work towards and achieve financial self-sufficiency:

- Access to Academic Programs (GED and Community College)
- Access to Vocational Training
- Access to Career Counseling and Skills Analysis / Assessment
- Access to Child Care and/or Child Care payment assistance
- Access to Family/Individual Counseling
- Access to Parenting Classes
- Access to Budget Assessment and Money Management Education
- Access to Job Placement Programming
- Access to Transportation and Transportation Assistance

3. Estimated Number of Participating Families

The BCHA's FSS program is a voluntary program and as of January 2014, the FSS program caseload consists of 111 families located in the following areas:

- BCHA PBV & Sec 8: 80
- BHP PBV & Sec 8: 31

FSS currently has 80 slots allocated for BCHA Project-Based Voucher units, and 32 slots allocated for BHP Project-Based Voucher units. The BCHA FSS standard caseload size is 40 participants per Full Time Case Manager; however, this will be changing once the new BHCA housing site, Aspinwall, is completed. Once Aspinwall is fully leased up there will be 24 more BCHA Project-Based Voucher units giving the BCHA FSS case managers a case load of approximately 48 participants. By September of 2014 there will be 104 BCHA PBV sites and 32 BHP PBV slots for a total of 136 PBV units.

4. Eligible Families from Other Self-Sufficiency Programs

Preference is given to households porting to, or being absorbed by, BCHA's FSS program. These households must be actively involved, and in good standing with the originating Housing Authority's FSS program.

5. FSS Family-Selection Procedures

It is the policy of the Boulder County Housing Authority to comply fully with all Federal, State, and local nondiscrimination laws; the Americans with Disabilities Act; and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations governing Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. Boulder County Housing Authority will ensure that it follows these Regulations and Laws to affirmatively further fair housing for all the Section 8 Programs including the Section 8 Housing Choice voucher, the Section 8 Project based Voucher and the Family Unification Program.

- No person shall, on the ground of race, color, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, familial status, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under the Boulder County Housing Authority housing programs.

To further its commitment to full compliance with applicable Civil Rights laws, the Boulder County Housing Authority will provide Federal/State/local information to applicants for and participants in the Section 8 Housing Program regarding discrimination and any recourse available to them if they believe they may be victims of discrimination. Such information will be made available with the application, and all applicable Fair Housing Information and Discrimination Complaint Forms will be made available at the Boulder County Housing Authority office. In addition, all written information and advertisements will contain the appropriate Equal Opportunity language and logo.

The Boulder County Housing Authority will assist any family that believes they have suffered illegal discrimination by providing them with copies of the housing discrimination form. The Boulder County Housing Authority will also assist them in completing the form, if requested, and will provide them with the address of the nearest HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for the FSS Program, applicants may be current BCHA Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher families or families that are eligible for a Project Based Housing Voucher, and/or have motivation to pursue educational and employment goals and qualify for housing.

- Individuals, who were enrolled in an FSS program in the past and **graduated successfully with an escrow account**, are not eligible to reapply to the program.
- Individuals who were enrolled in an FSS program in the past, but **did not graduate successfully**, or left the FSS program before the 5-year period was complete, might be eligible to reapply for the FSS program a second time. Depending upon individual circumstance, former participants may be eligible to reapply after 10 years from their previous exit from the program.
 - These former participants would be required to reapply to the FSS program by completing an FSS Application and attending an **FSS Re-Enrollment Panel Review** with a minimum of two members of the FSS Re-Enrollment Review Committee to discuss the circumstances surrounding their past FSS participation and to review their future goals. The FSS Re-Enrollment Review Committee would decide if re-enrollment is to be granted to the applicant.

Application, Waitlist, and Program Acceptance Process

A tenant with a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher or Project Based Voucher may apply for the FSS program by completing and submitting a written **FSS Application** to the FSS Program (attached). Applicants who do not currently have housing assistance may submit an application as well.

Once the FSS Case Management Team reviews the FSS applicant's submission, the FSS applicant will be contacted for the scheduling of an **FSS Applicant Panel Interview**.

The FSS Applicant Panel Interview is conducted by two (2) FSS Case Managers and is designed to: 1) determine applicant's motivation and readiness for the FSS program and 2) inform the applicant of the **BCHA FSS 5 -Year Program Requirements**.

Applicants will be screened on their: 1) motivation to become self-sufficient; 2) willingness to work with a case manager; 3) willingness and ability to complete the FSS Program Requirements; and 4) need for the supportive services offered through the FSS program.

Following the FSS Applicant Panel Interview, FSS staff will send a **FSS Decision Letter** to the applicant stating whether or not the applicant was **provisionally approved** for FSS.

If the applicant has not been approved post FSS Applicant Interview, the Decision Letter will invite the applicant to complete specific tasks/goals in order to further assess motivation to participate in FSS and to contact FSS staff with documentation of task completion. Supportive service resources are also included in the FSS Decision Letter.

- If an applicant was not approved and did not subsequently follow through on the specific tasks/goals detailed in the FSS Decision Letter, the applicant will be invited to reapply to FSS six (6) months after the FSS Applicant Panel Interview date.

If an applicant misses the first FSS Applicant Panel Interview, a second interview will be scheduled. If an applicant misses two interviews, that applicant will be asked to reapply to FSS in six (6) months.

Applicants who are approved after the FSS Applicant Panel Interview will be placed on the **FSS Provisional Waitlist**.

While on the FSS Provisional Waitlist, applicants will be asked to complete specific short-term tasks/goals to continue to assess motivation and maintain engagement with the FSS program. Applicants on the FSS Provisional Waitlist may be asked to attend such activities as: budgeting meetings and/or career counseling.

The FSS Staff will remain engaged with the applicants on the FSS Provisional Waitlist by doing monthly “check in’s” to ensure they are completing their personalized short-term tasks/goals, are maintaining contact with FSS, and are continuing to express interest in FSS participation.

Waitlist Process

For those applicants who do not yet have a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher or a Project Based Voucher the following will apply:

- When the short-term tasks/goals have been met, the applicant will be moved to the **FSS Standard Waitlist** and can be considered for future wait list openings. The applicant will be expected to maintain regular contact with FSS Staff. Once an applicant on the FSS Standard Waitlist moves into a BCHA or BHP designated FSS housing unit, that applicant will be assigned a FSS Case Manager and begin FSS participation.
- After six (6) months from the interview date, if an applicant on FSS Provisional or Standard Waitlist is still waiting for a housing unit, FSS Staff will schedule a **“Follow-up” Interview** with that applicant. The second interview will serve as a check-in on follow-through with requirements and as a way to assess ongoing interest level in FSS.
- If during the “Follow-up” Interview, it has been determined that the applicant has had difficulty in meeting the FSS Waitlist requirements, the FSS case manager will work with the applicant to provide resources and to assist with problem-solving and continued progress.
- If an applicant is not in compliance with the tasks/goals requested in writing by FSS, that applicant may be removed from the FSS Provisional or Standard Waitlist.

6. Program Enrollment

Applicants who have a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher or Project Based Voucher at the time of acceptance into the FSS program are mailed an **Acceptance Letter** assigning a **case manager** and instructing the applicant to **telephone in** to arrange an **Initial Enrollment Meeting**.

Applicants who have been approved for the FSS program who do not have a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher or a Project Based Voucher, and have been placed on the FSS Provisional Waitlist, are referred to the Boulder Housing Partners (BHP) Waitlist for a Project-Based Unit at the BHP Woodlands Residential Community.

Pursuant to 24 CFR Part 984.203, BCHA has adopted a selection preference for up to 50% of its original Section 8 FSS slots for the BCHA’s Section 8 Project Based Voucher Program.

When BCHA opens its waitlist for Project-Based units, a FSS Case Manager will contact the applicant with information on waitlist assignment. Once on the BCHA waitlist, applicants are ranked in the order in which they were approved, according to the **date of their interview**. When a housing unit becomes available, the applicant is contacted by BHP or BCHA. The participant's new housing is established and leasing contracts are signed with BHP or BCHA. Once the participant has moved into the unit, FSS is notified, and the participant is mailed an **Acceptance Letter** (mentioned above) assigning a **case manager** and instructing the applicant to **telephone in** to arrange an **Initial Enrollment Meeting**.

Applicants who are **denied program enrollment** will be 1) informed of the reasons for not being selected 2) offered suggestions for future program readiness, 3) provided with appropriate referrals to community resources, and 4) offered an invitation to reapply to the program at a later date.

During the **Initial Enrollment Meeting**, the FSS case manager **1)** reviews the 5-year FSS Program Requirements; **2)** explains the FSS Contract of Participation, Disclosure Statements, Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP); and **3) obtains the necessary signatures** from the participant to begin enrollment proceedings.

The FSS **Contract of Participation** is designed to clarify participant expectations and program offerings. The **Disclosure Statement** provides information on participant rights, as well as background information and the experience level of the FSS case manager. The **Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP)** is created to identify participant needs and assess the participant's current financial / academic standing. The ITSP needs assessment identifies the most pressing issues impacting the participant's life situation: education, health, finances, and family. Participants prioritize the importance of each need, issue or goal. The ITSP provides the participant and case manager a baseline goal plan for holistic development that will lend itself towards educational growth and financial independence.

Referral Sources

Referrals to the FSS program originate from a variety of local community agencies that serve low-income families. The FSS program staff network with personnel from governmental and non-profit organizations which manage: transitional housing, basic needs, TANF eligibility, childcare, vocational rehabilitation, academic institutions, and counseling agencies. Past and present participants also refer potential families to FSS.

7. Incentives to Encourage Participation

FSS Escrow Account – BCHA and BHP will establish an FSS escrow account for the participant family. When the participant family obtains an increase in earned income, rent payment is also due to increase. A portion of that rent increase will be credited to the participant family's FSS escrow account in accordance with HUD requirements.

- Once the participant family's Head-of-Household has successfully fulfilled the FSS Contract of Participation, the escrow funds will be disbursed to the family.
- The family may use the final disbursement of escrow account funds without restriction.

In 2013, thirteen of the eighteen FSS participants who graduated were able to increase their earned income and put money into their escrow accounts. The total dollar value of escrow accounts disbursed to these participants was \$81,545.65.

Personal Investment Enterprise (Individual Development Accounts) – FSS participant families are eligible for Individual Development Accounts (IDA's): matched savings accounts. Participant families who are interested in benefiting from this incentive are required to contribute least \$25.00 per month to their account. IDA savings are matched by public and private sources. IDA funds are specifically designated for high-return investments, such as: 1) first-time homeownership; 2) post-high school education; and 3) business capitalization.

Scholarships – FSS participants are eligible to apply for financial scholarships, which are offered periodically during the calendar year. FSS participants apply for the Scholarships by completing the **FSS Scholarship Application**.

The BCHA FSS Scholarships are awarded to up to four (4) worthy FSS Participants once per year. FSS scholarship funds can be used for **living expenses** while a FSS participant is attending school. Since tuition expenses are frequently covered by Pell Grants, applicants are able to use funds for other basic needs and daily living expenses.

- 1) Eligible Scholarship applicants must be enrolled in the FSS program for a least 1-year;
- 2) Applications must be fully completed and received by the stated submission deadline;

- 3) If an applicant applied in the past but was denied scholarship award, this applicant would receive priority consideration;
- 4) If a applicant received a scholarship in the past, they are ineligible;
- 5) Applicant's personal statement must stand out against other applicants in areas of personal growth, educational and/or family goals.

Scholarship Applications are reviewed by the **Scholarship Review Committee**, which consists of Program Coordinating Committee members, and BCHA staff.

The Scholarship Review Committee determines the scholarship award based on the **Scholarship Review Criteria** above.

Individual Scholarships can be awarded up to \$1,000 each, depending upon funding.

In addition, Individual Financial Scholarships are offered in smaller amounts throughout the calendar year to assist FSS participants in academic supplies, books and basic needs. These smaller scholarships range from \$100-\$300 and are based on client needs, positive standing in school, and positive standing in the FSS program.

Home Ownership Counseling – BCHA offers home ownership assistance/counseling for FSS participants who are interested in purchasing their own home.

Financial Assistance – FSS case management staff help participants with financial assistance for emergencies. Participants must also work with the Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA), Sister Carmen or the OUR Center staff to communicate their needs.

8. Outreach Efforts

FSS outreach materials are distributed to the two (2) Housing Authorities within Boulder County (Boulder County Housing Authority and Boulder Housing Partners). **FSS Program brochures** may be posted in a public area at the housing authorities to provide accessibility to the materials.

FSS case managers may conduct outreach by networking at community meetings, attending local events held by referral agencies and by conducting in-service trainings with partner agencies. In addition, BCHA FSS issues a bi-monthly newsletter to a Boulder County network of providers and participant families.

BCHA assures that both minority and non-minority families are informed about the FSS program. BCHA has bilingual (English – Spanish) employees on staff to ensure that we are meeting the language needs of the Boulder County community.

9. BCHA FSS Requirements

Successful graduation from the BCHA - FSS program means that program participants must have met the criteria below:

- Have been off TANF funds for 12 months;
- Have secured and maintained suitable employment;
- Have increased earned income resulting in contributions to escrow;
- Have increased TTP;
- Have remained in compliance with lease agreement;
- Have participated in the required Resident Council Meetings (for those properties that have these);
- Have remained in compliance with housing assistance requirements and rules;
- Have successfully completed all BCHA - FSS 5 -Year Program Requirements.

Exceptions to these rules can be made by the BCHA – FSS team, most specifically for those participants who have:

- Severe medical or health related issues;
- Extenuating family circumstances; or
- Are in the process of completing a higher educational program (Bachelor’s or Master’s degree), which will lead to suitable employment and increased pay.

Noncompliance with yearly requirements can result in 3-Month Probationary Contract period. Noncompliance with the 3-Month Probationary Contract may result in termination from the BCHA – FSS program and may result in loss of housing for participants residing in a PBV.

BCHA and BHP FSS participants, who reside in a PBV during their tenure in FSS, will be eligible for a HCV upon graduation. If HCV’s are not available at the time of

graduation, the participant is able to reside in their PBV unit until a voucher becomes available.

BCHA FSS 5 -Year Program Requirements

During the first year in FSS, participant activities include:

- Level 1- Financial Stability – attendance at 4 classes;
- Meet with Housing Counselor within the first 3-months for budgeting;
- Monthly meeting with case manager: a minimum of 10 meetings per year. Participant is responsible for setting these meetings in advance with case manager;
- Participate in home visits from Property Manager, Case Manager or Section 8 staff;
- Obtain a Credit Report;
- Complete 4 budget sheets with case manager during the year;
- Maintain compliance with lease agreement;
- Maintain compliance with housing assistance requirements and rules;
- 6-month Formal Written Plan which will assess client progress and determine the need for probationary period;
- **Annual Self Evaluations of Motivation** to identify steps taken towards Matrix Indicator progress and to establish future growth steps;

During the second year in FSS, participant's activities include:

- Completion of Parenting Course by end of 2nd year;
- Goals to Values course: Future thinking and preparation for the participants final years in BCHA-FSS and planning for successful graduation
- Monthly meeting with case manager: a minimum of 10 meetings per year. Participant is responsible for setting these meetings in advance with case manager;
- Participate in home visits from Property Manager, Case Manager or Section 8 staff;
- Obtain Credit Report;
- Complete 4 budget sheets with case manager during the year;
- Maintain compliance with lease agreement;
- Maintain compliance with housing assistance requirements and rules;
- 6-month Formal Written Plan which will assess client progress and determine the need for probationary period;
- **Annual Self Evaluations of Motivation** to identify steps taken towards Matrix Indicator progress and to establish future growth steps;

- **Presentation of Accomplishments**, successes, progress in FSS and application of parenting tools to the review panel.

During the third year in FSS, participant activities include:

- Level 2- Financial Foundation – attendance at 4 classes;
- Monthly meeting with case manager: a minimum of 10 meetings per year. Participant is responsible for setting these meetings in advance with case manager;
- Participate in home visits from Property Manager, Case Manager or Section 8 staff;
- Obtain Credit Report;
- Complete 1 budget sheets on own and 3 with case manager during the year;
- Maintain compliance with lease agreement;
- Maintain compliance with housing assistance requirements and rules;
- **Annual Self Evaluations of Motivation** to identify steps taken towards Matrix Indicator progress and to establish future growth steps.

During the fourth year in FSS, participant activities include:

- Attendance at two or more **approved community classes, groups, or workshops** that are applicable and appropriate for the individual participant’s circumstances and progress to date (example: Workforce Boulder County workshops, Circles program, PERL training, etc.);.
- Monthly meeting with case manager: a minimum of 10 meetings per year. Participant is responsible for setting these meetings in advance with case manager;
- Obtain Credit Report
- Complete 3 budget sheets on own and 1 with case manager during the year;
- Maintain compliance with lease agreement;
- Maintain compliance with housing assistance requirements and rules;
- **Annual Self Evaluations of Motivation** to identify steps taken towards Matrix Indicator progress and to establish future growth steps
- **Presentation of Accomplishments**, successes, progress in FSS and application of parenting tools to the review panel.

During the fifth year in FSS, participant activities include:

- Monthly meeting with case manager: a minimum of 10 meetings per year. Participant is responsible for setting these meetings in advance with case manager;
- Volunteer 10 hours to a community organization

- Sign Year 5 Terms and Conditions for Successful FSS Graduation at the start of fifth year;
- Obtain Credit Report
- Complete 4 budget sheets on own to share with case manager during the year;
- Maintain compliance with lease agreement;
- Maintain compliance with housing assistance requirements and rules;
- Pre-Graduation Review
 - Completed or in process of completing an educational program that will lead to suitable employment, or secured suitable employment and achieved progress toward goals
 - Submit TANF Assistance Verification form, documenting that all FSS household members are independent of TANF assistance and have been independent of TANF assistance for at least 12 consecutive months before leaving the FSS program
- Attendance at Graduation

Participant Progress

If a participant continues to fall short of progress, a **Case Review** with the Resident Services Program Manager and CM peers will be conducted to discuss the participant's continued eligibility for the program. If it is determined that a participant is not making reasonable progress toward the original ITSP, he or she may be placed on Terms and Conditions to be given an opportunity to start making progress towards their goals. If the FSS participant doesn't make progress while on Terms and Conditions, he or she will be placed on a **3-Month Probationary Period**, during which specific goals must be met. If the goals are not met, the participant is at risk of FSS contract termination.

10. BCHA FSS Supportive Service Offerings

Case Management – The BCHA FSS standard caseload size is 40 participants per Full Time Case Manager. Participants meet with their FSS Case Manager on a monthly basis to establish what progress has been made toward their ITSP. New goals are created for the following month, which will bring the participant closer to the life that they desire educationally, financially and emotionally. These goals are recorded for the participants to use as a reference tool, and as a tracking tool for case managers. Participants are offered access to a variety of resources in the community according to the needs that Case Managers recognize at each of the meetings, and the direct requests of the participants.

Career Closet – FSS participant families are eligible to access the Woodlands Community Center **Career Closet**, which consists of “gently used” donated professional clothing from women in the community. FSS participants can “shop” at the Career Closet by appointment for interview and/or work clothing.

Food Closet – FSS participant families are eligible to access the Woodlands Community Center Food Closet, stocked by BCHA FSS staff. Community Food Share provides donations of nonperishable food items.

Newsletter – FSS participant families receive a bi-monthly newsletter by FSS program staff. The newsletter disseminates information on upcoming FSS activities and events, as well as helpful community information, such as: location of flu shots, access to free school supplies, free workshops, health insurance options for children, and summer and after-school activities.

Holiday Adopt – A – Family Programs - FSS participant families are eligible to be sponsored or “adopted” by a donor family for the Thanksgiving and winter holidays.

Family Resource Directory – FSS participant families receive a free Family Resource Directory, which lists the addresses, phone numbers and brief descriptions of supportive services offered by local agencies.

Housing Stabilization Program and Emergency Financial Assistance – FSS participant families may be eligible for Housing Stabilization Program Funds and Emergency Financial Assistance for emergency situations. BCHA FSS can provide assistance with rent, utilities, childcare and other necessary expenses.

Services offered through agency partners:

- Gas vouchers from Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA);
- Bus passes from Boulder County Transportation Department;
- Career counseling, resume writing, job search assistance with Boulder County Workforce and the YWCA;
- Academic advising and financial aid assistance with Front Range Community College and the Educational Opportunity Center;
- Community Food Share provides food for our food bank;
- Boulder County’s Community Action Program administers PIE/IDA program;
- Rental, utility assistance & emergency food assistance with OUR Center, Sister Carmen and EFAA;

- Boulder County Housing Authority's Housing Counseling Department offers the Financial Stability/Financial Foundation classes and Homeownership workshops;
- Personal enhancement, enrichment and advancement through Bridges Out Of Poverty, Blue Print Class and Getting Ahead;
- Childcare support through the Colorado Childcare Assistance Program.

11. Method for Identification of Family Support Needs

FSS Case Managers meet monthly with FSS participants to assess: family needs, growth steps, acquired and desired skills, and appropriate linkages to supportive service resources. FSS Case Managers work in concert with the FSS participant family to identify realistic and attainable goals relating to education, career, job skills and personal enhancement. The Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP) serves as a guide to assess and maintain participant progress and drives supportive service delivery. FSS Case Managers maintain awareness of the community's economic capital in an effort to better assist families in identifying resources.

12. Policy for Termination or Withholding Assistance and Supportive Services

BCHA will make every effort to enable a family to remain in FSS and will approve reasonable revisions to the ITSP to accommodate changing circumstances.

Participants in the BCHA FSS Program can be exited from the program through graduation, voluntary withdrawal, and program termination due to non-compliance with BCHA FSS Contract of Participation.

Withholding/Termination of Services

FSS participants sign a Contract of Participation (COP) and will have a **six (6) month Formal Written Plan** with subsequent **Annual Self Evaluations of Motivation** (i.e. - Year 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). The annual Self Evaluation of Motivation assesses participants' progress on yearly goals, including progress in school and/or employment. FSS participants are required to complete a **Presentation of Accomplishments** during Years 2 and 4 of the program. The FSS Case Manager and a representative of the **FSS Program Coordinating Committee** will attend these formal reviews. If at any time the participant fails to complete required goals, the participant may be placed on **terms and conditions** for a three (3) month period. If the participant doesn't meet the requirements of their terms and conditions they will be placed a **probationary period** for three (3) months. The terms and conditions and the probationary period is an opportunity to take corrective action toward meeting goals and to avoid termination from the program.

If the participant fails to make a good faith effort to comply with the terms of the COP and the ITSP during the probationary period, FSS program services may be withheld or terminated. It is the intent of the FSS program to only have participants offered one (1) probationary period during their tenure with the BCHA FSS program but this may vary depending on the circumstances of each FSS participant. For any FSS participant that received a Project Based Housing Voucher, and thus priority in their placement on the BCHA Wait List, termination from the FSS program means that the participant will no longer be eligible for housing through the BCHA, and cease to have their rental subsidy paid for by the BCHA. For FSS participants with a Housing Choice Voucher, termination from the FSS program will not affect their housing status and they will continue to have their rental subsidy paid for by the BCHA. BCHA may at any time terminate program assistance for a participant, because of any action or inaction by the household as cited in the BCHA Section 8 Administrative Plan.

Appeal Process

The Appeal Process for the FSS Program follows the **BCHA Section 8 Administrative Plan: Informal Review for Applicants and Informal Hearings for Participants process.**

If an applicant is denied acceptance into FSS, or if a participant is terminated from FSS based on his or her failure to meet the FSS Contract of Participation and additional obligations, he or she can submit an **Appeal**, in writing, within 10 days of the denial or termination notification to the BCHA Resident Services Program Manager. Individuals who appeal will have the opportunity for an **Informal Hearing** to consider whether the BCHA decisions relating to the individual circumstances of a participant family are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations, and Boulder County Housing Authority policies and FSS contractual agreements.

BCHA will **schedule an informal hearing** within 10-business days or within a reasonable time of receipt of the written appeal. The hearing will be conducted by a **hearing officer**, any person or persons designated by the Boulder County Housing Authority, other than a person who made or approved the decision under review or a subordinate of this person. The hearing officer must issue a written decision within 10 calendar days from the date of the hearing, stating briefly the reasons for the decision. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family shall be based on a preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing.

The Boulder County Housing Authority will investigate and respond to complaints by participant families, owners, and the general public. The Boulder County Housing

Authority may require that complaints be put in writing. Anonymous complaints are investigated whenever possible.

13. Assurance of Non-interference with Rights of Non-participating Families

The BCHA FSS program assures that a family's election to not participate in the FSS program will not affect the family's admission to the Section 8 program or the family's right to occupancy in accordance with its lease.

14. Timetable for Implementation

The BCHA FSS Program accepts applications and new participants in order to fulfill BCHA program size requirements. BCHA reserves the right to close the FSS Waitlist when the FSS Caseload is at maximum (40 cases per full-time case manager) and when at least 20 applicants are on the FSS Standard Waitlist.

15. Certification of Coordination

FSS coordinates services and case management plans with other self-sufficiency related programs. The FSS program works closely with Work Force Boulder County (WFBC) and the Work Supports division in order to avoid duplication of services. WFBC and Work Supports offers services around training, employment workshops, and life skills classes. The new Work Supports Division, which is a branch of WFBC, was developed to assist those individuals who are not work ready and need additional support before moving on to WFBC. Other agencies that the FSS Program coordinates with are as follows:

- Head Start
- YWCA Career Center
- Educational Opportunity Center
- TANF
- Front Range Community College
- Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley
- Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Non-Violence
- Boulder County Mental Health
- The OUR Center
- A Woman's Work
- Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services
- Emergency Family Assistance Association
- Sister Carmen
- Community Food Share
- Boulder County Work Force

16. PCC Committee

FSS has a Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) that is a community collaborative of local public and private, nonprofit/for-profit, academic, public safety, grassroots human service organizations and community members. PCC works collaboratively to create the best possible impact on the lives of all Boulder County residents with a particular focus on FSS participants. PCC is committed to improving the quality of life for community members through partnerships, mentoring and building support networks. The PCC services in a general advisory role to the planning and implementation of the Boulder County Housing Authority's FSS program by:

*Identifying and providing linkages to community resources that will promote self-sufficiency for families;

*Assessing and addressing system barriers that may interfere with the goal of self-sufficiency and assist with the improvement of community wide service delivery.

The PCC meets on a quarterly basis, has 28 members which include community partners from Boulder Housing Partners, Front Range Community College, Education Opportunity Center, Faith based Representative, YMCA, Head Start, Workforce Boulder County, Colorado Child Care Assistance, Sister Carmen, Emergency Family Assistance Association, Boulder Valley Women's Health Clinic, Healthy Kids and Early Intervention Programs. The FSS program is continually looking to recruit new members for the PCC with the focus being on the local homeless shelter and Mental Health Center.