

WEST VALLEY HOUSING AUTHORITY

FSS ACTION PLAN

Approved: April, 2002
Revised: March, 2003
Revised: June, 2008
Revised: October, 2011

West Valley Housing Authority
Housing Authority and Urban Renewal Agency of Polk County
Family Self Sufficiency Action Plan
Revision Effective October 1, 2011

West Valley Housing Authority shall continue to operate Family Self Sufficiency Programs for both Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher, and this revised Action Plan simply reflects changes in policy to an already existing program. West Valley Housing Authority will continue the Public Housing Family Self-Sufficiency Program with ten slots. The Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Program shall be increased from the existing thirty-five slots to forty slots. This increase will be effective as soon as HUD approval is obtained.

1. Family Demographics

It is expected the supportive services needs of participant families will include various combinations of the following:

- Job training/career counseling
- Financial literacy and budget counseling
- Parenting education/support
- Housekeeping and maintenance skills
- Goal setting skills
- Home buying education
- Basic adult education
- Child care
- Family counseling
- Medical care information
- Conflict resolution skills
- Small business planning
- Credit rebuilding education/counseling
- Addiction counseling
- Good citizenship counseling
- Mentoring

The following demographics of the Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing programs are provided to give an indication of the types of households that are expected to be candidates for the FSS program. These demographics are including ethnicity, racial, income range, average annual income, household income, families with disabilities and the family composition breakdown.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM		LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM	
<i>ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN</i>			
HISPANIC OR LATINO	15%	HISPANIC OR LATINO	4%
NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO	85%	NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO	96%

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM		LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM	
RACIAL BREAKDOWN			
WHITE	95%	WHITE	97%
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	1%	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	1%
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE	2%	AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE	1%
ASIAN	0%	ASIAN	0%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN/OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	0%	NATIVE HAWAIIAN/OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	0%
MULTI-RACIAL	0%	MULTI-RACIAL (WHITE/AMERICAN INDIAN)	1%

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM		LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM	
ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN			
HISPANIC OR LATINO	15%	HISPANIC OR LATINO	4%
NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO	85%	NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO	96%

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM		LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM	
INCOME RANGE BREAKDOWN (ELI, VLI, LI)			
EXTREMELY LOW INCOME (0% - 30% OF MEDIAN)	77%	EXTREMELY LOW INCOME (0% - 30% OF MEDIAN)	64%
VERY LOW INCOME (31% - 50% OF MEDIAN)	20%	VERY LOW INCOME (31% - 50% OF MEDIAN)	31%
LOW INCOME (51% - 80% OF MEDIAN)	3%	LOW INCOME (51% - 80% OF MEDIAN)	4%
ABOVE LOW INCOME (81% + OF MEDIAN)	0%	ABOVE LOW INCOME (81% + OF MEDIAN)	1%

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM	LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM
AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME	
\$11,165.00	\$11,858.00

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM		LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM	
<i>HOUSEHOLD INCOME BREAKDOWN (SPECIFIC BREAKDOWN)</i>			
\$0 (NO INCOME)	3%	\$0 (NO INCOME)	3%
\$1 - \$5,000	8%	\$1 - \$5,000	6%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	45%	\$5,001 - \$10,000	40%
\$10,001 - \$15,000	18%	\$10,001 - \$15,000	28%
\$15,001 - \$20,000	14%	\$15,001 - \$20,000	15%
\$20,001 - \$25,000	7%	\$20,001 - \$25,000	5%
ABOVE \$25,000	5%	ABOVE \$25,000	3%

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM		LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM	
<i>FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES</i>			
FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES	34%	FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES	51%
FAMILIES WITHOUT DISABILITIES	66%	FAMILIES WITHOUT DISABILITIES	49%

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM		LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM	
<i>FAMILY COMPOSITION BREAKDOWN (AGE)</i>			
0 – 5 YEARS OF AGE	19%	0 – 5 YEARS OF AGE	6%
6 – 17 YEARS OF AGE	32%	6 – 17 YEARS OF AGE	11%
18 – 50 YEARS OF AGE	38%	18 – 50 YEARS OF AGE	26%
51 – 61 YEARS OF AGE	6%	51 – 61 YEARS OF AGE	17%
61 – 82 YEARS OF AGE	4%	61 – 82 YEARS OF AGE	34%
83 + YEARS OF AGE	1%	83 + YEARS OF AGE	6%

2. Program Outreach

The FSS Program Coordinator shall market the Family Self Sufficiency Programs through newsletters, bulletin boards, mailings, HCV briefings and Public Housing move ins. All mailings shall be available in both English and Spanish. Also other agencies that offer partner services will offer flyers at their place of business as well as case worker referrals.

Bilingual Staff (English and Spanish) will be available to answer questions regarding the program. Hispanic families represent the largest non-English speaking minority group in the Section 8 program.

Mail notifications will go out to all Section 8 voucher holders, regardless of bedroom size, to assure that any single, disabled clients will also be notified of the program availability.

3. Incentives to Encourage Participation

As an incentive to encourage families to participate in the FSS Program, WVHA will establish an FSS escrow savings account for the family in accordance with the requirements set forth in §984.305.

Additional incentives include scholarships for goal related class registration fees including, but not limited to, Financial Literacy and ABC's of Home buying.

Additionally we have a CASA IDA Specialist on staff to offer Micro-Enterprise and Education IDA's.

4. FSS Activities and Supportive Services

The following agencies will provide resources and services for FSS participants:

Polk Community Development Corporation: Will provide certified home ownership counseling and credit repair counseling to the FSS participants. They will also offer the CASA of Oregon Homeownership IDA slots for 3 of the FSS participants.

Chemeketa Community College: Career exploration; job search skills; goal setting; Individual assessment; advisement and action plans; Adult Basic Education courses; English as a Second Language Course; etc.

WorkSource Center/ Job Growers Inc: Will offer a FAST TRACK to receive assistance with resume building; application process; interview skills; and computer access to government agency job listings.

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency: Cash assistance with expenses such as utility bills, rent payments, prescriptions, etc. Also coordinates resources for R.E.N.T. (Renters Entering New Tenant Experiences) classes to provide a new start for renters with bad

tenant/landlord references or credit histories. Also, houses and coordinates the Polk County Food Bank providing emergency food boxes to households in need.

Oregon Department of Human Services: Cash grants for families who meet the guidelines, which includes participation in the JOBS program; assistance with employment related daycare; food stamps. They will also offer referrals to the FSS Program Coordinator for the clients names to be added to the FSS waitlist.

Chemeketa Training and Economic Development Center: MERIT program, microenterprise training, education, counseling and support.

Polk County Mental Health: Case management for persons with mental health issues/disabilities. Referrals for families having trouble dealing with emotional issues, other disabled family members, counseling for a variety of issues.

SABLE House: Polk County domestic violence shelter and counseling.

Consumer Credit Counseling Services: Assists persons with credit problems in formulating budgets based on actual income, negotiating with creditors for payment of bills, education on getting and maintaining good credit.

Marion-Polk Legal Aid Services, Inc.: Legal resources/ counseling for low income families.

Marion-Polk Gleaners: A membership based food cooperative that provides groceries for low income families and provides those families with an opportunity to volunteer with the program when they are physically/mentally able.

Polk County Service Integration (SIT) Team: Provides a team approach for problem solving for Polk County families who are experiencing systems barriers. This network brings together staff from various local social service agencies to determine if there are creative approaches to better serve these families. Safety Net keeps statistics to determine where true gaps in the system occur so that Leadership Council for the county can address those service gaps accordingly.

Dallas Ministerial Association: One time cash assistance to help families meet unexpected expenses.

VORP/Community Mediation Services: Provides mediation services for neighbor conflicts, parent/teen conflicts, and through Chemeketa Community College provides training in conflict resolution.

Head Start: Pre-school program for children ages 3-5 and their families. Services available to low income families; includes parenting skills classes.

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center: Tribal health department provides community health services for the Native American population and for non-native American community members. Also provides social services, including cash assistance, to tribal members.

Parents Anonymous: A support group which meets weekly to assist parents dealing with parenting issues.

M.O.P.S. (Mother's of Pre-Schoolers): A support and activity group for mother's of children who are not yet school age.

Polk County Drug and Alcohol Treatment: Is accessed through the Mental Health system and provides treatment options/counseling to families seeking rehabilitation.

CARTS (Chemeketa Area Regional Transportation System): Provides transportation in the forms of public transportation buses and dial a ride services, connecting the cities within Polk County and with the Salem area.

Connections: A volunteer run organization which provides transportation to and from West Valley Hospital for non-emergency tests and procedures.

H2O (Help & Hope to Others): A local non-profit organization who runs a thrift store; provides furniture and clothing in emergency situations; provides emergency food boxes.

5. Program Eligibility

All households who hold a current voucher and all current Public Housing tenants are eligible to apply for the Family Self Sufficiency Programs. Upon execution of a lease, applicant families become tenants or participants and are then eligible to participate in the Family Self Sufficiency program. Families who are currently on the HCV or PH waiting lists are not eligible to apply until they become tenants or participants.

The Housing Authority will not deny any family the opportunity to apply for or to participate in FSS on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, age, familial status, marital status, handicap or disability, sexual orientation. In addition, selection for participation in the program will not depend upon level of education, job history, job performance or credit history of the applicant.

6. Program Application

Applications will be available upon request from the FSS Program Coordinator. A standard application will be used for both programs. The application will include: name; address; contact phone numbers; program of participation (HCV or PH); recertification date; and dated signature of head of household. Applications will be kept by the FSS Program Coordinator and added to the participant's FSS file upon acceptance to the program. Applications will be stamped with a received date and entered on to the waiting list.

7. Waiting List

Applicants will be placed on a waiting list by date and time of receipt and available slots will be filled from the top of the waiting list. The waiting list will be maintained by the FSS Program Coordinator and will be kept both electronically and in paper file.

8. FSS Family Selection Procedure

When there is an available slot in the FSS program it will be offered to the family at the top of the FSS waiting list for that program. Contact will be made with the applicant family both by phone and by mail to offer the FSS slot to the family. If the applicant family does not respond within two weeks, a second and final attempt will be made by phone and mail to contact the family. If applicant family fails to respond, the family's application will be withdrawn and a withdrawal letter will be sent to the family alerting them that their name has been withdrawn and they may re-apply at a later time.

9. Program Re-Entry

A family who has previously terminated their FSS contract of participation will be eligible to reapply for program participation after one year has passed since the date of contract termination.

A family who has been terminated from the program for non-participation can request approval to reapply one year after the termination of contract. Requests to reapply will be in writing, and should detail why the family has a desire to participate, what changes have been made in the household since the date of termination and one short term goal. The written request will be submitted to the FSS Program Coordinator. Upon proof of completion of the stated short term goal, the previously terminated family shall be allowed to reapply.

A family who has graduated and received their escrow will not be eligible to enroll in the program again. Exceptions will be made for families who have had significant changes in household members due to death of spouse or divorce. These exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis. A minor child of a graduate family, who has reached majority and established their own household is eligible to enter the program.

10. Methods for Identification of Family Support Needs

The FSS Program Coordinator or a Resident Services staff member/case manager will meet with each family to assess their personal barriers to self sufficiency. This assessment will include a structured interview which addresses issues such as child care, transportation, job history, educational back ground, social network system, medical issues, family issues, and housing situations. Upon identification of the family's needs, goals will be established including: long term; interim; and short term goals. A plan with specific time lines and responsibilities will be established with all of the HUD required long term goals as well as the individual family goals.

11. Interim Disbursements (Withdrawals):

Interim disbursements will be allowed if the FSS Program Coordinator and the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager/ Executive Director determine that the disbursement is necessary for the participant family to reach their goals. Disbursements over one thousand dollars shall require the approval of the Executive Director. Requests for interim withdrawals shall be made in writing and shall include a complete plan as to how the funds are to be utilized and how this expenditure is necessary to reach the participants goals.

12. Program Termination; Withholding of Services; and Available Grievance Procedures:

FSS participant families who fail to meet the requirements of their FSS contract of participation will be advised verbally and in writing of which requirements they are failing to fulfill. The head of household will be directed to meet with the FSS Program Coordinator to discuss the problem and negotiate a mutually acceptable resolution.

If a resolution cannot be reached or if the head of household fails to respond, the family will lose the supportive services provided for them under the program. The family will be issued a letter of warning, advising them that they have lost their supportive services and may be terminated from the FSS program, if the provisions of their contract cannot be met, or if the activities in their Individual Training and Services Plan cannot be satisfactorily renegotiated.

Prior to termination from the program, the family will be issued a letter, inviting them to a conference with the FSS Program Coordinator to discuss their failure to fulfill their obligations under the FSS program and what actions must be taken to comply with the program. The FSS Program Coordinator will make a decision on the case after meeting with the family and will notify them in writing of the decision. Should the family fail to attend the review meeting, it will be determined that the family has voluntarily withdrawn from the program. If the family is terminated based upon a formal review meeting, the family may request and receive a

review of the case by the FSS Program Coordinating Committee, which will then make a recommendation to the FSS Program Coordinator. The FSS Program Coordinator will then take the final action on the case.

FSS participant families who fail to meet their family obligations under the Housing Choice Voucher Program will be automatically terminated from the FSS program with no review by the FSS Program Coordinator or the FSS Program Coordinating Committee. The Housing Authority will follow the review procedures in the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan in considering termination of the Family's housing assistance.

13. Non-Interference with Rights of Non-Participating Families:

If a family elects to not participate in the FSS program, the family's admission into the Housing Choice Voucher or Public Housing programs will not be affected.

14. Certification of Coordination:

West Valley Housing Authority certifies that development of the services and activities under the FSS program have been coordinated with the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program under part F and Title IV of the Social Security Act, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and other relevant programs.

15. Suitable Employment

Suitable employments shall be determined by the head of household's long term goals in the Individual Training and Service Plans. Long term goals shall include employment specific goals. Identifying specific employment goals, i.e. specific career field, annual wage goal, time on the job goal, etc.

16. Participant Reporting Requirements:

All participants shall make, at a minimum, quarterly progress reports to their FSS Coordinator. Quarterly reports can be done, in person, over the phone or via mail. Should the FSS Coordinator opt to have the participant report via mail, it is the responsibility of the FSS Coordinator to send out the quarterly contact letters to participants requesting their current progress statement. A participant who does not respond to requests for quarterly information shall be further contacted to determine if they wish to remain on the program and if necessary, the termination process will begin.

17. The Program Coordinating Committee:

This committee, consisting of community partners, and a program participant from each program, will meet at least semi-annually to review the progress of the program, discuss resource gaps, provide information regarding potential new programs available and review current successes and failures of the program. The FSS Program Coordinator will contact PCC members when questions arise about how to access community programs and to make referrals/advocate for FSS participants. The FSS Program Coordinator uses the current Polk County Service Integration Team (SIT) as the PCC. This team meets monthly and all community agencies attend and staff families that are in need. This team also brings new resources to the team as they become available.

FSS participants shall be selected to sit on the SIT Team/PCC by level of seniority in the program. Participants shall sit on the committee for a term of one year, at which time the seat will be passed to the head of household with the next highest seniority in the program.

18. Timetable for Program Implementation

Upon notification from HUD that we have been approved for an increase from thirty-five to forty HCV slots, the following timetable will apply:

- A. Within one month of approval, all Section 8 voucher holders will receive notification regarding availability of the program, along with a response sheet. Upon the Housing Authority's receipt of response sheets, they will be logged in on a "waiting list" for scheduled interviews.
- B. Beginning two months following approval, interviews will be scheduled with the interested applicants in order to the "waiting list" noted in A above.
- C. Applicants will then be enrolled in the program on a "First come, first served" basis.
- D. The current HUD-approved HCV-FSS 35 slots and the current HUD-approved Public Housing 10 slots will be continuously kept filled with replacement participants as quickly as possible. Within six months of HUD-approval, the additional 5 HCV-FSS slots will be identified and enrolled in the program.
- E. The semi-annual and annual reporting on the FSS program's progress will be provided to HUD on a timely basis as required.