

SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM



FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY ACTION PLAN

October 1 2008



City of Tempe
Development Services Department
Housing Services Division

**CITY OF TEMPE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
HOUSING DIVISION**

www.tempe.gov

**P.O. BOX 5002
21 E. Sixth Street, Suite 214
Tempe, Arizona 85280-5002**

**Business Telephone:
480/350-8950**

**Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD):
480/350-8913**

**Information Line
480/350-8974**

**FAX:
480/350-8902**

**Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Reasonable accommodations for persons with
disabilities may be requested.**



**CITY OF TEMPE HOUSING AUTHORITY
SECTION 8 FSS ACTION PLAN**

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	1
III. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS/SECTION 8 TENANT PROFILE	2
IV. INCOME LIMITS FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS	3
V. PARTICIPATING FAMILIES	4
VI. FSS FAMILY SELECTION PROCEDURES	4
A. Outreach/Recruitment	4
B. Selection of Participants	4
C. Method of Establishing FSS Participant Waiting List	5
VII. INCENTIVES	6
A. Case Management	6
B. Escrow Accounts	6
C. Homeownership Opportunities	6
D. IDEA Grant	7
E. Homeownership Education	7
F. Interim Recertification Policy	7
VIII. ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	7
IX. IDENTIFICATION OF SUPPORT NEEDS	10
X. PORTABILITY	11
XI. PROGRAM TERMINATION	11
A. FSS Termination	11
B. Section 8 Program Termination	12
XII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES	12
XIII. ASSURANCE OF NON-INTERFERENCE	12
XIV. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	13
XV. CERTIFICATION OF COORDINATION	13
XVI. EAST VALLEY ALLIANCE	13
XVII. AMENDMENTS TO PLAN	13
XVIII. SUMMARY	16

Revised:

March 30, 2000

June 19, 2003

October 2008

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Tempe Housing Services, (THS) currently administers the Section 8 Tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher Program. In accordance with the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, as amended by Section 106 of the Housing Community Development Act of 1992, a Housing Agency receiving funding was required to establish a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program.

The purpose of the FSS Program is to promote the development of local strategies to coordinate the use of rental assistance under the Section 8 Rental Housing Choice Voucher Programs with public and private resources to enable eligible families to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency.

This Action Plan describes the implementation and administration of the THS's Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

II. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

In accordance with FSS Regulations, the required size of the THS's FSS program is 55 families. The mandatory initial program size was established by HUD. Our original program number was 91 families. The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 allows the program size to decrease by one for each family that, after October 21, 1998, fulfills their obligation under the FSS Contract of Participation.

THS's FSS program will voluntarily increase the FSS program size to 65 FSS participants. This will include the mandatory FSS program size and a voluntary FSS program. As the mandatory FSS program decreases the voluntary program size will increase. All current Section 8 participants; individuals and families will be offered the opportunity to participate in the FSS Program on a continual basis.

Section III of this Action Plan provides a breakdown of the demographic characteristics of our current Section 8 Program participants.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS/FSS TENANT PROFILE

Required number of FSS Participants	55
Current number of FSS Participants	72
Voluntary number of FSS Participants	80

Female Head of Households	92%
Male Head of Households	8%

Low Income Households - 80% of AMI	04%
Very-low Income Households - 50% of AMI	96%

White	47%
Black/African American	25%
Hispanic/Latino	22%
Asian	00%
American Indian/Alaska Native	06%

Number of Graduates since 1994	31
Number of Graduates since QHWRA of 1998	22

Number of Participants with Escrow	40
Number of Participants without Escrow	32

Number of Participants Employed Full Time	16
Number of Participants Employed part-time	15

Number of full-time students	20
Number of part-time students	19

Participants 18-29 years old	21%
Participants 30-39 years old	38%
Participants 40-49 years old	32%
Participants 50+ years old	10%

IV. INCOME LIMITS FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The income limits for Section 8 participants is established and adjusted annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, (HUD). The table below reflects the income limits for the various sizes of families that will participate in the THS' Family Self-Sufficiency Program (effective 2/26/03):

<u>Number of Persons</u>	<u>Income Limits</u>	<u>Number of Persons</u>	<u>Income Limits</u>
1	\$20,400	2	\$23,300
3	\$26,250	4	\$29,150
5	\$31,500	6	\$33,800
7	\$36,150	8	\$38,500

V. PARTICIPATING FAMILIES

The FSS participants are representative of the Program characteristics: female head of household and very-low income.

VI. FSS FAMILY SELECTION PROCEDURES

A. Outreach/Recruitment

To recruit participants for the FSS Program, the THS markets the program to all current Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program participants. During the annual recertification process, each Section 8 participant is asked if they are interested in learning more about the FSS Program. There is a question on the Annual Recertification Questionnaire that asks Section 8 tenants if they want to know more about FSS. Their Section 8 Housing Specialist has a supply of FSS Interest forms to hand out to interested participants. (Attachment 1).

New Section 8 participants will receive FSS information in each briefing packet and, when possible, the FSS specialist will make a presentation at all group-briefing meetings.

A bulletin board in the THS's waiting room displays FSS, educational, employment and homeownership information, as well as information concerning community support systems.

Presentations to DES and Maximus caseworkers help their caseworkers provide FSS information to Section 8 participants who receive their assistance.

B. Selection of Participants

The THS screens families for interest and motivation to participate in the FSS Program as follows:

1. Any Section 8 participant may complete an FSS Interest Form. Each Section 8 caseworker is provided with FSS brochure/interest forms and supplies a form to any tenant that shows an interest in FSS on their annual recertification form. There are FSS forms also available in the Tempe Housing Services waiting room. All forms are date and time stamped when received by the THS.
2. All families who have submitted an FSS Interest Form will be required to attend a mandatory FSS briefing session. The FSS briefing session will introduce the FSS Program in depth and will answer questions from the participants.
3. After the briefing session, those families interested in participating in the FSS Program must complete an FSS Request for Participation Form (Attachment 2) within ten (10) calendar days.
4. Families or individuals that complete an FSS Request for Participation Form list will be required to write their Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP) and met with the FSS specialist to approve of the ITSP prior to signing an FSS Contract of Participation. Individuals will remain on the FSS Waiting List until there is an available slot. Interested individuals or families on the FSS waiting list will be brought into the FSS program according to:
 1. Date and time of the interest form
 2. Date of the completion of the Individual Training and Services plan and approval by the FSS specialist.
5. The FSS Specialist will schedule evaluation appointments for participants at the top of the waiting list. The Specialist will handle the participant's intake and assessment, will develop the family's training and service plan and monitor the family's progress through the achievement of all set goals and self-sufficiency.
6. Portable Family Self-Sufficiency participants, whose voucher is absorbed by the THS, will immediately be eligible for the FSS Program if there is an FSS slot available in the THS's program.
7. Families owing debts to any housing authority may participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, however full payment of the debt will be an interim goal as part of their Individual Training and Services Plan. The debt must be paid in full as a requirement for completion of the FSS Program and the collection of the family's escrow account.

C. Method of Establishing FSS Participant Waiting List

If more families submit Request for Participation Forms than the THS has slots available, the THS will establish an FSS Participant Waiting List. The names of those families who are interested in participating in the FSS Program will be placed on the list by:

1. Date and time that the participant submitted the FSS Interest Form.
2. Attendance at the mandatory briefing session and submission of the Request for Participation Form.
3. Completion of developing an Individual Training and Services Plan.
4. Meeting with the FSS Specialist to discuss and approve of the Individual Training and Services Plan.
5. Signing a Family Self-Sufficiency Contract of Participation.

If a family does not attend the mandatory briefing session, her/his name will be removed from the FSS Participant Waiting List.

If a family does attend the mandatory briefing session but does not submit the Request for Participation Form within ten (10) calendar days after the briefing, her/his name will be removed from the FSS Participant Waiting List.

If an individual is removed from the FSS Waiting List, he/she may re-submit an FSS Interest Form, with a new date and time stamp.

VII. INCENTIVES

A. Case Management

Each participant that signs an Individual Training and Services Plan and an FSS Contract of Participation will receive case management and service referrals.

B. Escrow Accounts

The THS will use the Escrow Account as one incentive for Program participation.

Each FSS participant will have an Escrow Account established in accordance with HUD Regulations. The ledger will contain individual information on each FSS participant:

- the participant's name
- escrow transaction by date and amount

- interest earned on the balance
- total account balance.

The main escrow account will be invested in HUD-approved investments. Interest earned on main escrow accounts will be earned on a monthly basis and allocated to the individual accounts annually on an equitable basis.

A family may request a disbursement of a portion of their escrow account during the contract period for contract-related expenses. The request must be submitted in writing with documentation supporting the request. The FSS supervisor and the FSS specialist will make a determination on a case-by-case basis for the early escrow release and the interim goals that must be completed prior to an early escrow release.

When a FSS family has met the conditions of their FSS Contract and certifies that they are not receiving any Federal or State welfare assistance, they will graduate from the FSS Program. The escrow amount will be totaled. Any interest accrued will be added to the account. A check will be issued to the family head of household as soon as all verifications are received and earned interest is confirmed.

C. Homeownership Opportunities

Family Self-Sufficiency participants who desire to purchase a home will have interim goals in their Individual Training and Services Plan that prepare them for homeownership. The City of Tempe provides a Community Assistance Mortgage Program for low to moderate-income families. There are also two non-profit organizations operating in the City of Tempe. NewTown and Community Land Trust of Tempe provide low to moderate families with affordable housing opportunities.

D. IDEA Grant

The City of Tempe Family Self-Sufficiency Program applied for, and was awarded, funding with the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco through a member bank for an IDEA Grant. FSS Participants are eligible to receive a 3:1 matching funds grant (up to \$10,000) to help with down payment or closing costs. The participant must have earned escrow for at least 10 months, use the funds for closing costs and down payment, and have their mortgage with the member financial institution. This funding multiplies the buying power of the FSS 1st Time Homebuyer.

E. Homeownership Education

The City of Tempe FSS Program provides homeownership counseling on an ongoing basis. Each family also is provided information about the homeownership opportunities in the metropolitan community. If a family wishes to purchase a home outside of the city of Tempe, they will be directed to a non-profit homeownership counseling group that is aware of the funding opportunities in that community. The FSS East Valley Alliance has a homebuyer's club that is dedicated to education, homeownership counseling, credit counseling, the IDEA grant, and offering a variety of workshops to prepare FSS participants to become knowledgeable and prepared homeowners.

F. Interim Reexamination Policy

Family Self-Sufficiency Program Participants can request that the Section 8 Housing Specialist process an Interim reexamination, (increasing the amount of escrow earned each month). This change will be processed if:

- the effective date of this change is 6 months or more from the Annual Reexam date.
- The FSS participant requests that an interim be completed.

A change will be effective on the first day of the month following 60 days from the effective date of the change. Example: a wage increase for an FSS family that is effective March 4th will result in a rent change effective June 1st. This policy allows an individual the opportunity to increase the funds in their escrow account. With the IDEA grant, an individual can leverage the funds in their escrow account for a 3-1 match for downpayment assistance.

If income or assets are underreported, the Section 8 caseworker will take corrective action following the Section 8 Administrative Plan. Any changes to the FSS escrow will be completed based on the effective date of the changes and the escrow computation changes.

VIII. ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The supportive services needed for the FSS participants are those services that will provide economic independence and self-sufficiency. The supportive services offered to FSS participants include job training, education and literacy training, job placement, child care, parenting training, career and personal counseling services, transportation, budgeting, homeownership counseling and case management.

The following is an overview of the supportive services, and the sources for those services, which are provided to the FSS participants:

Housing:

City of Tempe Housing Division

Child Care:

City of Tempe Social Services Division (Kid Zone)
Department of Economic Security
Maximus
Headstart
Boys & Girls Club of the East Valley

Education:

Maricopa County Community Colleges

Arizona State University
Maricopa Skill Center
Tempe Union High School District/Basic Adult Education
Mesa Education Center

Job Training/Placement:

Maricopa Skill Center
Maricopa Workforce Connections
DES Vocational Rehabilitation
Maximus
Arizona Women's Education & Employment
Maricopa Community Colleges

Career Counseling

City of Tempe Social Services Division
Arizona State University Career Center
Mesa Community College Re-Entry Center
MAXIMUS
East Valley Catholic Social Services
Jewish Family and Children's Service
Value Options
PREHAB of Arizona

Literacy Training:

Rio Salado Community College
Gateway Community College
Literacy Volunteers of Maricopa County
Maricopa Skill Center
Maximus
Tempe Union High School District
City of Tempe Literacy Program

Transportation:

City of Tempe Transportation Dept. (bus passes)
Maricopa County Transportation Dept.
MAXIMUS
Maricopa Skills Center

Worklinks
Phoenix Metro

Phoenix Transit
Tempe Flash

Personal Counseling:

City of Tempe Social Services Division
Arizona State Counselor Training Center
Planned Parenthood
Value Options
DES Vocational Rehabilitation
East Valley Catholic Social Services
Jewish Family Services
Mesa Community Colleges
Child Crisis Center—East Valley, Inc.
Arizona State University Counseling Services

Parenting:

City of Tempe Social Services Division
East Valley Catholic Social Services
East Valley Resource Center
Planned Parenthood
Parents Anonymous
Child Crisis Center
Maricopa County Juvenile Court
PREHAB of Arizona
Tempe School District
Mesa Public Schools

Case Management:

City of Tempe Housing Division
MAXIMUS
City of Tempe Social Services Division
Tempe Community Action Agency

Money Management

Consumer Credit Counseling
American Family Credit Counseling
Family Self-Sufficiency Conference

Homeownership Counseling

Housing for Mesa

NewTowN CDC
Neighborhood Housing Services
Community Housing Resources of Arizona
Phoenix Community Housing Resources Board

IX. IDENTIFICATION OF SUPPORT NEEDS

The success of the FSS Program will depend greatly on how effectively the participant's needs are addressed. Each participant's needs will be different from any other. Each prospective participant's needs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The Family Self-Sufficiency Specialist assists the FSS participants by providing support, identifying appropriate resources, assisting with the development of a service plan and providing advocacy towards the achievement of goals.

The FSS Specialist handles intake and assessment, develops the family's training and service plan, monitors the family's progress through to the achievement of all set goals, and supports the family towards their goal to become self-sufficient.

The FSS case management is a continual process of identifying and reviewing problems that block or interfere with the promotion and achievement of self-sufficiency and economic independence for FSS participants.

X. PORTABILITY

The Housing Specialists will notify any FSS Section 8 family that requests portability that they must complete a Request for FSS Portability (Attachment 4) prior to their being approved for portability to another jurisdiction.

Portability for an FSS participant will be approved if all of the following apply:

- the family has resided in Tempe for at least 12 months from the effective date of their FSS Contract of Participation
- the family has met all their other family obligations under the Section 8 Program

If the family wishes to go portable to another jurisdiction, but does not plan to continue in the FSS Program at the new jurisdiction, the family's FSS Contract of Participation will be terminated and the family will forfeit any funds in the escrow account.

If the family requests portability to another jurisdiction's FSS program, it will be approved if:

1. The receiving housing authority absorbs the Section 8 assistance
2. The family signs an FSS Contract of Participation with the receiving housing authority's FSS Program within 30 days after they lease in the receiving jurisdiction.
3. The receiving jurisdiction requests, in writing, transfer of the family's escrow account.

The family's FSS Contract of Participation will be terminated if the receiving housing authority does not allow the family to participate in its FSS Program. The family will lose the funds in their escrow account.

The family's FSS Contract of Participation will be terminated if the receiving HA does not absorb the family's housing assistance. The family will lose any funds in their escrow account.

XI. PROGRAM TERMINATION

A. FSS Termination

1. The FSS family will be terminated from the FSS Program if the family violates the FSS Contract of Participation.

The THS will review the circumstances of the non-compliance prior to termination to determine if termination is an appropriate remedy. If necessary, the Contract of Participation may be renegotiated with the family. Support Services will not be withheld from the family unless the family is terminated from the FSS Program.

If the THS determines that the Contract of Participation will continue to be violated, regardless of whether there is a renegotiation of the Contract, the FSS family will be terminated from the FSS Program and will forfeit any escrow the family may have earned.

2. The family and the THS may agree to terminate the contract.
3. The family may voluntarily withdraw from the FSS program.
4. If the family is terminated from the Section 8 Program, the FSS Contract of Participation is also terminated.

If the family is terminated from the FSS Program, the family will not be allowed to participate in any FSS Program administered by the City of Tempe Housing Services Division for five (5) years from their termination date. The family may continue to receive Section 8 subsidies as long as the Contract of Participation violation did not violate any of the family's other obligations under the Section 8 Program.

B. Section 8 Program Termination

The FSS family's Section 8 assistance will be terminated if:

1. The family violates any of its family obligations under the Housing Choice Voucher,

or any other cause listed in the THS's Administrative Plan.

2. If a family is terminated by the THS for program abuse, willfully withholding information from the THS, and/or family obligation violation, the family will not be allowed to participate in the Section 8 program for a period of five (5) years from the date of termination. All debts owed to the THS, by the family, must also be repaid prior to being allowed to participate in the Section 8 Housing Assistance Program.

XII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The Grievance Procedures for FSS participants will be the same as those for non-FSS families as described the City of Tempe Housing Services's Administrative Plan.

XIII. ASSURANCE OF NON-INTERFERENCE

A family's participation in the FSS Program is voluntary. In order for a family to be considered for participation, the family must first willingly submit an FSS Interest Form. The family must also willingly attend the Mandatory Briefing Session, submit the Request for Participation Form, a Family Assessment and then write an Individual Training and Services Plan.

Because the decision on whether to participate in the FSS Program is the family's, the THS assures that a family's decision not to 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.

XIV. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The THS's implementation of its FSS Program has met HUD requirements. The THS received the HUD Notification Letter of Approval of new units on October 25, 1993. The City of Tempe's FSS program is fully operational.

XV. CERTIFICATION OF COORDINATION

The THS, by approval of this plan, certifies that the development of the services and activities under the Family Self-Sufficiency Program has been coordinated with the relevant employment, child care, transportation, training and education programs available in our area of operation and that implementation of such services and activities will continue to be coordinated, not only to maximize their effectiveness but also in order to avoid duplication of services and activities.

XVI. EAST VALLEY ALLIANCE

The Cities of Tempe, Chandler, Mesa and Scottsdale have united to form one Program Coordinating Committee, (PCC). Many of the businesses, social service agencies and educational institutions serve the participants in each of these cities.

The PCC board meets on a quarterly basis and supports the FSS programs in all four cities. Each of

the city's FSS Specialists is a member of the PCC. In addition, two FSS Participants selected from the four cities serve on the PCC.

The East Valley Alliance's PCC fully supports the FSS Programs, sponsors programs for the participants and works diligently to obtain support from the community for the FSS families.

XVII. AMENDMENTS TO PLAN

Substantial deviations or significant amendments or modifications are defined as discretionary changes in the plans or policies of the THS that fundamentally change the mission, goals, objectives or plans of the agency and which require formal approval of the City Council of the City of Tempe.

Changes to this plan, not considered substantial deviations or significant amendments, based on changes in Federal, state or local rules, regulations or policies, may be adopted without formal approval of the City Council. All changes and/or amendments must however be reviewed by the Resident Advisory Board.

XVIII. SUMMARY

The interaction between the THS and the providers of social services are a vital link to the success of the FSS program. The FSS Program is implemented and managed by the City of Tempe's Housing Services and will continue to be a successful program.

The THS's successful track record with the Section 8 Programs is an indication of the Agency's commitment to excellent service.



The City of Tempe does not, in the provision of services, or in any manner,
discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex
family status or disability