



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Housing Authority of the City of Austin

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HACA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program Wins Grant from HUD to Help Residents Achieve Economic Independence

\$370k in federal funding will support connections to education, employment, and financial literacy for Austin families experiencing income challenges

AUSTIN, TEXAS Feb. 1, 2022 – The Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) announced today that their Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program has been awarded funding in the amount of \$371,602 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These federal funds allow HACA to provide Service Coordinators for the calendar year 2022. Service Coordinators are crucial to HACA's mission of helping families find jobs, increase earned income, reduce the need for rental assistance, and make progress toward achieving economic self-sufficiency.

"Earning this support from HUD is a direct result of HACA's FSS Program's successful track record," said Lisa Garcia, **Vice President of Assisted Housing**. "In just the past 5 years, FSS graduates have increased their family earned incomes by an average of \$23,983 per year, and earned a total of over \$1.1 million in escrow savings. This is a life-changing program."

HACA has operated a high-achieving FSS program since 1994, with HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) administering on the federal level. HACA's FSS Service Coordinators work directly with residents for up to five years to achieve their goals and to connect them with existing programs and services in the local community. Goals that FSS participants set for themselves may include earning a GED or high school diploma, going to college or finishing a degree, improving credit scores, and building escrow savings with the pathway toward purchasing a home.

Residents in the program sign a voluntary five-year contract of participation and agree to set specific goals and achievements to accomplish during that time. To graduate from the program, the resident must establish employment and be free of cash welfare assistance for twelve months prior to graduation. Families in the FSS program have an interest-bearing escrow account established for them. The amount credited to the family's escrow account is based on increases in rent due to improved family

income during their time in the FSS program. After graduation, the FSS resident receives the escrow funds to help pay for personal advancements like educational expenses or make a down payment on a home.

"Our FSS approach takes into account the whole person and addresses the real-world barriers on their pathway to success," said Becky Summersett, Family Self-Sufficiency Manager. "When a resident completes this program with a new career, a great credit score, or is prepared to buy their first home, a permanent impact has been made within their family that ripples out to the community."

Residents of HACA's Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program may apply for the FSS program. To learn more about HACA's Family-Self-Sufficiency Program, visit hacanet.org/residents/fss-services.

About the Housing Authority of the City of Austin

Established in 1937, the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) is a public unit of government separate from the City of Austin. HACA's mission is to cultivate sustainable affordable housing communities and partnerships that inspire self-reliance, growth, and optimism. As a High-Performing housing authority that assists over 20,000 Austinites, HACA owns and operates 1,839 units of subsidized housing in 18 developments throughout Austin. For more information, visit www.hacanet.org, or find us on Twitter [@hacanet](https://twitter.com/hacanet).

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