

GHA Helping Families Become Self-Sufficient

Greensboro Housing Authority (GHA) was awarded a grant for in the amount of \$282,581 for the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program for Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher programs through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). 2017 marks HUD's 25th anniversary of the program which has been an essential piece of GHA's Resident Services programming since 1993. Across the country, HUD awarded \$75 million to help low-income residents receive job training and employment.

The FSS Program helps Public Housing Authorities hire coordinators who work directly with residents through connecting participants to supportive services such as education, training, case management, transportation, child care, job counseling and other existing resources in the community. The goal of the program is to help participants make measurable progress toward economic security so that they no longer need welfare programs, are less dependent on rental assistance, and are better able to achieve the goals they set out for themselves and plan for the future.

Participants in this voluntary program sign a five-year contract that requires the head of the household to obtain employment and that no member of the household will receive certain types of public assistance at the end of the five-year term. An interest-bearing escrow account is a unique feature of the program, which helps participants build up their assets and provides an incentive. Funds are credited to the escrow account based on increases in a family's earned income during the term of the FSS contract. If the family successfully completes the FSS contract, they receive the escrow funds which can be used for any purpose, including debt reduction in order to improve credit scores, educational expenses, or a down payment on a home.