



Metro Housing|Boston Self Sufficiency Programs

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

Metro Housing|Boston provides participants in the federally-funded Housing Choice Voucher Program (commonly known as Section 8) the opportunity to participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program. FSS is a voluntary program designed to help families achieve increased economic self-sufficiency over a five-year period.

What kinds of services are provided?

FSS participants are matched with an FSS Advisor to provide one-on-one coaching and assistance with reaching their goals. This can include financial literacy and coaching, credit help, education, job skills, and career guidance.

Metro Housing|Boston's FSS program has experienced significant growth over the past five years due in large part to a grant from The Boston Foundation and, most recently, a partnership with Compass Working Capital.

How does it work?

FSS participants work toward self-identified goals focused on education, workforce development, and asset building; receive one-on-one counseling; and can build an escrow account if their earned income increases. Participants graduate from FSS in five years if they have met their goals of obtaining employment and have not received public assistance benefits during the past 12 months.

Are there other benefits?

As a participant's earnings increase, an escrow amount is calculated based approximately on the difference between the starting and increased income. This amount is deposited into an escrow account on behalf of the participant. When the participant successfully completes the program, he or she receives the escrowed money. These funds are often used for future homeownership or higher education. Graduates of the program are not required to leave the Section 8 Program.

MassLEAP

Metro Housing|Boston provides eligible participants in the state-funded Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) the opportunity to participate in the Massachusetts Learning, Employment and Asset Program (MassLEAP) in partnership with Jewish Vocational Service (JVS).

What kinds of services are provided?

Metro Housing MRVP voucher holders are connected to career, education and finance coaches from Jewish Vocational Service to support them as they work to attain their goals toward personal and professional development. Participants are connected with job training programs, credit repair resources, assistance with enrolling in a degree program or finishing one and securing employment to increase your earned income.

How does it work?

As earned income increases for the participant, an escrow amount is calculated based on the increase in income and subsequent increase in the tenant share of the rent. This amount is deposited by Metro Housing|Boston into a MassLEAP escrow account. When the participant graduates from the program, the funds in the escrow account are available for the participant to use toward things like homeownership or higher education. Participants can continue to participate in MRVP after graduation from Mass LEAP, as long as they remain otherwise eligible.

Eligibility Requirements

MRVP participants are eligible for MassLEAP if they have a child under the age of 18, regardless of educational level, work experience, or current employment status. Enrollment is limited to 50 participants.

Family Economic Stability Program (FES)

The Family Economic Stability (FES) program is a 5-year, time limited, flat-subsidy rental assistance program designed to help families reach economic stability through intensive case-management and support. Enrollment is limited to 50 participants. The waiting list for this program is currently closed.

What kinds of services are provided?

FES participants work closely with the FES Coordinator and receive intensive, one-on-one coaching and assistance with reaching their goals. These goals are self-identified by the participant to be able to afford market rent at the end of the program. Individual goals may include, education, child care, job training and career guidance as well as financial literacy and coaching.

How does it work?

There are three principle components to this program, Rent Subsidy, Support Budget and Escrow Account.

Rent Subsidy: This program provides a flat subsidy, based on family size, that is time limited. The subsidy is available for 5 years and there are no extensions. The flat rent decreases in years 4 and 5 of the program. The decrease in rent during years 4 & 5 is put into a rent escrow account that the participant may access upon successful completion of the program.

Support Account: Each participant may access up to \$1800 a year to support completion of economic stability goals. The support funds may be used for educational or employment related costs.

Escrow Savings Account: Participants are eligible to accrue up to \$800 per year in escrow funds. These funds will be leveraged by deposits into individual savings held by participants at a rate of \$4 escrowed for each \$1 saved.