

**The Housing Authority of the City of Tampa**

**FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

**ACTION  
PLAN**



**The Housing Authority of the City of Tampa  
Action Plan**

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Housing Authority of the City of Tampa

Family Self-Sufficiency Action Plan

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Housing Authority of the City of Tampa (HACT) FSS Action Plan revision is to reflect the program's current status, outline operational procedures and assurances, and highlight the comprehensive range of services encompassed within an integrated system of care.

## **II. MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the HACT Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is to promote the development of local strategies, to coordinate the use of assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) with public and private resources, enable participating families to increase earned income and financial literacy, eliminate the need for welfare assistance, and make progress toward achieving economic independence and housing self-sufficiency. The Authority's FSS program provides critical tools that are used by families to develop new skills that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Through this program the Authority has established working partnerships with service providers and employers. As a result of participation in the FSS program, many families have achieved stable, well-paid employment, met many sufficiency goals, which has made it possible for them to become homeowners or move to other non-assisted housing or homeowners through the HCV program.

## **III. PARTICIPANT PROFILE**

### **A. Demographic Profile of FSS Participating Families**

All HCV participants are eligible to participate as long as there is an available position and the participant agrees and signs the FSS Contract. The current baseline for HCV participants is 7,935 with an FSS program size over 421 participants with a current cap of 450 unless there are additional approved FSS counselors. The current mandatory HUD FSS baseline is 154 participants. Families have the opportunity to reside in area of Hillsborough County excluding Plant City.

**CURRENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

Age of Head of Household	Actual Number
18-20	27
21-29	974
30-39	2237
40-49	1507
50-61	1358
62-69	565
70-79	360
80-89	186

Sex of Head of Household	Actual Number
Women	6756 - 91%
Men	636 - 8%

Race	Actual Number
Black	70% - 5085
Asian	.2% - 18
Am Indian	.1% - 6
Native American	0% - 3
White	28.9% - 2086
Multiple	.2% - 14

Ethnicity	Actual Number
Hispanic	1652
Non-Hispanic	5560

Relation Count	Actual Number
Adult	1473
Co-Head	50
Foster	12
Head	7212
Live-In	96
Spouse	380
Student	537
Youth	10833

**MARKETING STRATEGIES:**

Outreach Efforts	FUNCTION (Flyer distributions/ Presentations)	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	DATE(s)
	Open Enrollment	Program Services	Ongoing

**B. Target Number of FSS Participants and Implementation Timetable**

HACT already serves over the mandatory slots of 154 participants. THA will continue its outreach to encourage those families who are without income and are on welfare to enlist in the FSS program. THAs goal currently will be 450 participants. Once the cap is met, a waitlist will be established.

Program implementation has already occurred and outreach selection and enrollment are ongoing. FSS slots are in the process of being filled and will continue to be filled as vacancies occur and as additional slots are created. The services identified in this Action Plan are in place and are being accessed by FSS participants.

**C. Supportive Needs of FSS Participating Families**

As identified by the intake assessments, the primary barriers identified by FSS participants as prohibiting factors for becoming economically self-sufficient are:

- Lack of marketable employability skills
- Educational deficits
- Need for general counseling

- Lack of life skills
- Transportation
- Child care

Secondary barriers include:

- Low self-esteem
- Low self-worth
- Possible substance abuse issues
- Learned helplessness

The system of care HACT provides to FSS participants is responsive to these identified barriers of a culturally diverse population and strives to deliver resources that will counter barriers and mitigate needs.

#### **IV. ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING**

##### **A. Staffing**

The Department currently has 6 FSS counselors and a Homeownership counselor. The counselors are responsible for the recruitment, intake and case management of FSS participants. The FSS Counselors take a holistic approach to assessing needs and coordinating services for the HACT participants as a means of offering a continuum of care across various government and community-based organizations.

The FSS Counselors assist participants in goal setting, provides counseling and service referrals, and addresses program retention issues as they arise. The Counselor is also responsible for monitoring and maintaining the participants' escrow accounts.

##### **B. FSS Program Coordinating Committee**

HUD recommends the coordinating committee be comprised of members representing various city agencies, non-profit community-based organizations dealing with work readiness services, and non-profit service providers. The PCC includes representatives from organizations important to the welfare-to-work community in all its facets: educational, policy development, vocational training, and direct service delivery.

##### *FSS Program Coordinating Committee Membership*

CDC of Tampa  
Early Childhood Learning Program  
Hispanic Service Council  
Arbors at Padgett Estates (Resident)

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Housing Authority of the City of Tampa

Family Self-Sufficiency Action Plan

FSS Counselors – Assisted Housing Department  
Hillsborough County Vocational/Technical Center  
Tampa Community Health Center  
President of Hillsborough Literacy Council  
President of Tampa Bay Black Business Investment  
Big Brothers Big Sisters  
Hillsborough County Health Department  
Welfare of Florida Transition Program  
DACCO  
Hillsborough County School District  
Center for Affordable Housing  
Tampa-Hillsborough Action Plan  
USF Small Business Development Center  
Vocational Rehabilitation  
West Tampa Neighborhood Service Center  
Chase Mutual Bank  
Tampa Police Department Community Relations  
Bay Area Legal Services  
HARTline  
James A. Haley, Veteran’s Hospital  
Brewster Technical Center  
Erwin Technical Center  
Centre for Women  
Head Start  
Dress for Success

## **V. OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT**

FSS recruitment efforts focus on program participants especially those receiving welfare (TANF) benefits and are currently without any income. Participation in the FSS program is not mandatory; however, the HACT actively implements outreach activities to enroll clients in the FSS program on a volunteer basis. HACT seeks highly motivated clients without regard to race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin who choose to become self-sufficient.

Notices are provided at initial intake into the program, during ESS meetings, as well as during recertification meetings. Families are also referred to the FSS counselors by housing counselors.

- Outreach will be targeted equally to minority and non-minority families to ensure non-English and limited English speaking families receive information and have the opportunity to participate in the FSS program. Efforts will also be made to serve persons with disabilities including, but not limited to, persons with impaired vision or hearing. Interpreters will be used as needed.

## **A. FSS Family Selection Procedures**

It is the policy of the HACT to comply with all Federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws; the Americans with Disabilities Act; and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations governing Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under the FSS program on the ground of race, color, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, familial status, source of income, or disability. In addition, HACT's FSS staff will, upon request, provide reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities to ensure they are able to take advantage of the services provided by the FSS program (see Requests for Reasonable Accommodations below).

The FSS staff has the primary responsibility to make sure participants are not discriminated against in the selection process. For families or individuals whose potential enrollment is in question, the FSS staff will review the file in a staff meeting to ensure non-selection is not based on discriminatory factors before the final decision is made. Applicants will be notified in writing of the reason(s) they were not selected for participation and will have the opportunity to appeal the decision (see section on Hearing Procedures).

At all times, HACT will select families for participation in the FSS program in accordance with HUD guidelines. Currently there is not an FSS waitlist but if in the future it is necessary families will be placed on a first come first serve and will be selected in that manner.

HACT clients who express an interest in the FSS program may be screened before being enrolled in the program within the following HUD allowable guideline: voluntary participation in an FSS program orientation on either a group or individual basis. The orientation will include a review of participant expectations, the services offered, and the requirements to complete the FSS program. Those interested clients who have successfully completed the program orientation and express further interest in enrollment will be chosen for participation based on a first come, first served policy.

Referrals for the FSS program may be accepted from, but are not limited to, any of the following: program counselors/managers, client advocacy/service provider agencies, current FSS participants, or self-referral. If all FSS program slots are filled, HACT will maintain a waiting list of families to be enrolled based on a first come, first served policy and families will be enrolled through attrition as slots become available.

HACT, at its discretion, may deny participation in the FSS program to a family that previously participated and was terminated from FSS because the family did not meet their obligations according to the Contract of Participation. HACT, at its discretion, may allow a family that previously participated in the FSS program and was terminated to sign a new Contract of



Participation if the cause for termination of the original contract was due to circumstances beyond the family's control, such as a serious illness.

### **B. Assurances of noninterference with rights on nonparticipating families**

During recruitment efforts, the HACT provides assurances to families that their election not to participate in the FSS program will in no way affect their admission, continued assistance in the Housing Choice Voucher program.

## **VI. PARTICIPANT RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND INCENTIVES**

While conduct enabling participants to get and keep a job is strongly encouraged, for many FSS clients "work readiness" traits need to be learned through services that help develop appropriate behaviors and attitudes. FSS program efforts will direct services to clients who want to work but have not yet internalized the skills that would make this possible. Thus, the FSS environment is more of an educational setting where clients are informed and supported while pursuing vocational endeavors and high value is placed on self-discipline, emotional control, punctuality, and good grooming.

### **A. FSS Individual Training and Service Plan**

Individual rights and responsibilities and FSS program commitments to the participant are outlined in the FSS Individual Training and Service Plan (ITSP), a contractual agreement that specifies the services, achievements, and interim goals expected to lead the client ultimately to self-sufficiency. Where appropriate, the ITSP will take into account similar plans that may have been developed by other employment-related programs and agencies. The ITSP also includes the FSS obligation to facilitate access to or directly provide services and support for the participant to achieve interim and final self-sufficiency goals.

The FSS ITSP will include interim achievements so progress may be monitored toward the ultimate goal of financial independence. If a participant fails to achieve an interim goal or maintain attendance and/or performance standards in any particular service or services, the FSS Counselor will first determine if the FSS program or any service provider failed to fulfill their obligations. If the responsibility is with the program itself or a service provider, the Counselor will investigate the reasons for the failure and take steps to correct them. The Counselor and the participant may also, if mutually agreeable, change the ITSP to substitute a different service or provider.

### **B. Meeting Responsibilities**

Should a participant fail to maintain their ITSP obligations, the Counselor will investigate the specific causes for the failure. If external barriers are preventing participation, the Counselor will take steps to help remove them. If the failure is due to the participant's dissatisfaction

with the ITSP or any part of the ITSP, the Counselor will attempt to determine the reasons for the dissatisfaction and try to reach an agreement with the participant.

If the Counselor determines that a participant has failed to fulfill the specific terms of the ITSP without good cause or has behaved in an inappropriate manner the contract may be terminated.

### **C. Termination and Hearing Procedures**

#### **Involuntary Termination:**

Participants may be denied or involuntarily terminated from FSS under the following circumstances:

1. If the participant fails to meet their obligations under the Contract of Participation, the ITSP, the Program Completion Agreement, and related documentation. Non-compliance includes:
  - Missing scheduled meetings
  - Failure to return phone calls
  - Failure to maintain monthly contact
  - Failure to complete quarterly face-to-face reviews
  - Failure to work on activities and/or goals set forth in the ITSP
  - Failure to complete activities and/or goals within the specified timeframes
  - Failure to participate in job-related activities such as: employment, education, training, workshops, completing application, etc.
2. If the participant has committed fraud in connection with any Federal housing assistance programs.
3. If the participant failed to meet family obligations.
4. Expiration of the Contract term or any extension of the Contract without completing the criteria for program completion as outlined under the section Contract of Completion
5. If the client's housing assistance is terminated.

6. By operation of law
7. By such other act as is deemed inconsistent with the FSS program

Participants who fail to meet their obligations under the above circumstances will be given the opportunity to attend a required meeting with the FSS Counselor or assigned HACT representative to resolve the problem. At this meeting, a review of the Contract of Participation, ITSP, Program Completion Agreement, and all related documentation will be conducted and amendments will be made as necessary, within HUD guidelines, to allow for changes in circumstances. Failure to contact the FSS Counselor to schedule this meeting within ten (10) business days of HACT's written request for a meeting or failure by the FSS Head of Household to attend this meeting without some type of correspondence to clarify the issue(s) leading to non-attendance, may lead to termination from the program.

Participants who remain out of compliance after this meeting will be subject to termination from the FSS program. Notification to the family will be made by letter stating:

1. The specific facts and reasons for termination
2. A statement informing the family of their rights to request an informal hearing and the date by which this request must be received (see Hearing Procedures below)
3. A statement informing the family that termination from the FSS program for the reasons stated therein will not result in termination of the family's housing assistance

Failure to request a hearing in writing by the deadline will result in closure of the family's FSS file and all rights to a hearing will be waived. All escrow money held on the family's behalf will be forfeited in accordance with HUD regulations. Housing assistance will not be terminated based on non-compliance with the FSS program.

**Voluntary Termination:**

Participants may also be terminated from the FSS program under the following circumstances:

- A. Mutual consent of both parties
- B. The family's withdrawal from the program

If the family withdraws from the FSS program with the mutual consent of HACT and the FSS Head of Household, then the family may rejoin the FSS program in the future with the following understanding:

1. The family signs a new Contract of Participation, Program Completion Agreement, and ITSP
2. The family is not eligible to receive funds accrued in escrow up to the point of their initial withdrawal from FSS
3. The family will be eligible to receive future deposits into escrow upon rejoining the FSS program

### **Hearing Procedures:**

All requests for informal hearings must be received by HACT within ten (10) business days of the date of decision. If a hearing is requested by the FSS family, notification to the family regarding the date, time, and location of the informal hearing will be made by certified mail, return receipt requested, within ten (10) business days from the date the request was received.

Persons included in the informal hearing shall include, but not be limited to:

- The FSS Head of Household
- The FSS Counselor
- HACT staff members, other than FSS program staff, serving as the Hearing Committee

The family may request to reschedule a hearing for good cause, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of the family. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date. At its discretion, HACT may request documentation of the “good cause” prior to rescheduling the hearing.

If the family does not appear at the scheduled time and was unable to reschedule the hearing in advance due to the nature of the conflict, the family must contact HACT within 24 hours of the scheduled hearing date, excluding weekends and holidays. HACT will reschedule the hearing only if the family can show “good cause” for failure to appear, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

The Hearing Officer will issue a written decision to the family within ten (10) business days after the hearing. The decision made by the Hearing Committee will be final. HACT reserves the right to overturn the Hearing Committee's decision only in the event the decision is contrary to policy.

#### **D. Incentive Plans**

As part of the FSS program, HACT offers incentives to encourage participation and enhance the participant's ability to achieve self-sufficiency. FSS Escrow Accounts are an effective incentive tool motivating clients to participate in the FSS program. In accordance with HUD regulations, HACT opens and maintains an interest-bearing account on behalf of each client during their participation in the FSS program as a financial incentive for program participation. The escrow entitlements may be used for home ownership, credit resolution, career development, or any goal as outlined in the participant's interim goals.

#### **Escrow Account Deposits:**

Escrow deposits are calculated on increases in earned income as they impact the family's Total Tenant Payment (TTP) at the time the Contract of Participation was executed. Escrow credit calculations will be made whenever HACT conducts an interim or annual reexamination during the Contract of Participation. HACT will credit escrow accounts monthly and calculate interest quarterly. At least annually, HACT will provide FSS families with an escrow statement reflecting beginning and ending balances, deposits, withdrawals, and interest accrued.

#### **Interim Withdrawal Procedures:**

Participants in good standing with the FSS program and HACT will be allowed to request money from their escrow accounts prior to the completion of their Contract. The early withdrawal of funds must be used for continuing growth and for reaching the goals articulated in the ITSP. All FSS families with an escrow balance are eligible to request a withdrawal.

The Head of Household must submit a budget in addition to a written request for an interim withdrawal. The request must include:

1. The amount of money requested
2. The amount of money the family will be investing
3. How the funds will be used
4. How this will facilitate their movement toward self-sufficiency

5. An assessment of their progress on their self-sufficiency goals
6. Alternative funding sources they have tried
7. Documentation of expenses

The FSS staff will discuss the appropriateness of the request during a regularly scheduled meeting. The FSS program reserves the right to request the family to attend a meeting for clarification of the withdrawal request before a determination is made and/or require additional documentation prior to making a decision.

The decision to release escrow will be made by consensus of the staff members and the decision will be binding. If the withdrawal request is denied, the FSS family will be given a written response outlining the decision.

**Final Disbursement of Escrow:**

Final disbursement of the FSS Escrow Account will be made to the FSS Head of Household when a written request is submitted, and the family has met the obligations as defined in the Contract of Participation.

**Forfeiting of the Escrow Account:**

Funds in the FSS Escrow Account will be forfeited if:

1. The Contract of Participation, including any extension, expires and the obligations are unfulfilled
2. The FSS family loses their housing assistance
3. The FSS family is deemed to be out of compliance with the FSS program and is terminated, and/or
4. The FSS family voluntarily terminates their enrollment in the FSS program.

**Additional Incentives:**

Additional incentives include, but are not limited to, enhanced opportunities for education, training, and employment. FSS participants have access to financial counseling, credit repair, homeownership workshops, health fairs, and available resources about the home buying process. FSS participants also have a number of personal incentives for involvement

including: structured goal planning, greater opportunity to increase their standard of living, an enhanced support system, increased self-esteem, etc.

HACT reserves the right to revise the plan when and if additional official incentives may become available.

## **VII. METHODS FOR IDENTIFICATION OF FAMILY SUPPORT NEEDS**

### **A. Assessment and Referral**

Most inquiries from potential participants and referrals to the FSS program go through the FSS Counselor. Preliminary conversations convey program details and explain the program is designed to provide clients with tools that will allow them to become welfare free and self-sufficient. Individuals who feel they need more education and/or training before returning to work are not discouraged; however, the FSS Counselor emphasizes the belief that frequently the best training for returning to the workforce involves work itself. Workplace learning enables the client to internalize the skills necessary to hold down a job: showing up on time, showing up every day, learning to interact with co-workers, learning to follow instructions, and so forth.

The client is invited into the office for a program orientation. The client has the opportunity to ask questions and determine whether the goals and objectives of the program meet his/her needs. If the client is interested, the FSS Counselor sets an individual assessment interview appointment. The Individual Training and Service Plan is developed and executed at the time of this interview.

For clients who are not working when they join the FSS program, the assessment will focus on the immediate barriers to employment and longer-range career goals. For those with jobs, the assessment will address needs and resources related to job stability, retention, and career advancement. The assessment will identify the family's resources and needs in such areas as: work experience, job search and retention skills, education, training, childcare, and transportation and determine if the family is receiving welfare assistance. The assessment will also address such issues as physical and mental health, parenting, budgeting and household management, English language skills, coping skills, and other skills necessary to gain and sustain employment. Several key objectives will guide the assessment process covering the many issues faced during a participant's preparation for and entry into employment:

1. Determine whether the participant is ready to look for work, including whether the participant has the skills needed for the type of employment sought and whether additional training would enhance the participant's long-term employability

2. Determine which service needs the family can meet themselves and which will require outside assistance
3. Encourage participants to identify and build on the positive life skills, strengths, and capabilities they already possess
4. Establish priorities among identified needs

The assessment will provide the basis for developing the family's FSS ITSP. The FSS ITSP will outline steps towards long-term independence from public assistance, establish interim goal timeframes, identify potential barriers, and anticipate strategies for overcoming barriers. The FSS ITSP also outlines FSS program commitments to support the participant's efforts and delineates the roles and responsibilities of program staff in helping participants reach their goals. The FSS ITSP, like the assessment, will be reviewed periodically; staff and participants may choose to revise ITSPs as appropriate.

## **B. Contract of Completion**

In order to successfully complete the FSS Contract of Participation and receive any money in the FSS Escrow Account, participants must meet the following criteria:

1. The Head of Household has obtained suitable full-time employment, as defined below, and maintained it for at least one year.
2. All members of the household have been independent of welfare for at least twelve (12) consecutive months. Welfare is defined as income assistance from Federal or state welfare programs, and includes only cash maintenance payments designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs. It does not include food stamps, Social Security payments, Medicaid, or similar benefits.
3. All activities listed on the ITSP must be completed within the designated timeframes.
4. The household is in good standing with the HCV program.

Full-time employment is defined as:

- For hourly or salaried employees, at least 32 hours per week
- For self-employment, net earnings of at least 32 hours per week at minimum wage
- Accommodations for disabled individuals—Requests for accommodation must be submitted in writing and supported by a written statement from the individual's



medical provider at least 120 days prior to program completion. The statement will include a recommendation from the medical provider as to a specific number of hours the individual is able to work due to disability. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Suitable employment is defined as follows:

- Employment with an established, legitimate business-or-
- Self-employment which is verifiable through signed Federal income tax returns
- Contracted or commission employment will be considered if it meets the hourly/income requirements, is verifiable, and is being declared for tax purposes
- Informal employment which does not meet the criteria listed above will not be considered (employment where income is not declared for tax purposes
- Employment must be considered a lawful activity

#### **Contract Extensions:**

The initial contract term is five years. The contract may be extended for up to two additional years if the family is unable to achieve self-sufficiency in this time due to circumstances beyond their control such as:

- Serious illness in the immediate family
- Involuntary loss of employment
- Serious injury that interferes with employment opportunities—and/or
- Other circumstances beyond the control of the family and that are deemed as good cause by HACT

Extensions will not be granted for loss of employment due to lack of performance on the part of the FSS participant.

All requests for extensions must be submitted in writing prior to expiration of the Contract of Participation. The request letter should include the following components:

1. An explanation of why the goals were not completed
2. What goals still need to be completed

### 3. The timeframe in which the goals will be completed

Participants will be notified in writing of THA's decision within ten (10) business days and may request an informal hearing if they disagree with the decision (see Hearing Procedures below).

During the extension period, the family will continue to be eligible to receive deposits into the FSS Escrow Account. The FSS Head of Household will be required to continue abiding by the Contract of Participation, Program Completion Agreement, and ITSP, as well as keep in regular contact with the FSS Counselor during the extension.

## **VIII. FSS ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

The primary goal of the HACT's approach to the FSS program is to help clients become welfare free, clarify their vocational goals, link and refer them to necessary services, and provide the ongoing support they need to maintain their focus and motivation.

Thus, the intake interview is the foundation of a client's participation in FSS. It is during this interview the Counselor lays the groundwork for developing a successful long-term relationship with the client. The objective is to build a relationship based upon respect for the client, an assessment of the client's needs, appreciation of their strengths, and an understanding of any barriers to employment and services necessary to overcome them.

Following the initial assessment, the frequency and type of regular follow-up FSS participants receive will depend on the participant activities and needs. The FSS Counselor will be available to clients for phone consultations and in-person visits on a scheduled basis.

Individual client contact will also occur through frequent calls to monitor individual progress. In general, the FSS Counselor will contact those families who do not report in to get an update on the participant's current activities, discuss progress toward interim goals, and identify any areas where the participant may need assistance. The FSS Counselor will have more frequent contact with participants who request additional assistance and/or who are known to be having difficulties. When the monthly reports indicate a job loss, the FSS Counselor will make every effort to contact the client immediately either by phone or letter to schedule an in-person visit.

Although the FSS Counselor will be supportive and share some responsibility for coordinating and arranging services, ultimately the participant will be encouraged to assume responsibility for obtaining the services needed to implement their strategy for self-sufficiency. Staff will convey a consistent message that participants need to take control of, and assume responsibility for, their working lives. This acceptance of responsibility will be critical to the participant's success in the workplace.

The FSS Counselor will work as a team along with the participants to assist them as they work toward employment and self-sufficiency. The FSS Counselor provides individuals and families in-house services as well as referrals to additional services in the community as appropriate. The FSS Counselor will coordinate closely with resource providers to ensure participants making the transition to work are supported with comprehensive services.

### **A. Service Referrals**

Following the development of the FSS ITSP, the FSS Counselor will begin assisting participants with identification of resources needed to begin implementing their plans for reaching self-sufficiency. Participants seeking further education are referred for additional academic assessment if needed; those who are still identifying their employment goals may be referred for more in-depth testing and career counseling. Depending on the participant's interests and prior education, referrals may be made to local providers of basic education (GED), vocational or technical education, English as a Second Language course, and/or academic training. Participants who are already looking for work or who are planning to begin a job search may be referred to programs sponsored by the Tampa Workforce Alliance. Participants may also receive referrals for supportive services such as: childcare and transportation assistance, personal and family counseling, and/or medical services.

To make effective use of the education, training, and support services available to FSS-eligible families, the FSS Counselor compiles, maintains, and updates a directory of local service providers. The FSS Counselor will make every effort to follow up with participants and service providers regarding the outcomes of referrals. Staff will make sure the participants were able to contact the provider, the needed services were available, and the participant is satisfied with the quality of service. Heavy reliance is placed on clients reporting if they are unable to access the referred services so, if needed, intervention may take place on their behalf.

### **B. In-House Services**

The comprehensive assessment focuses on the skills and resources necessary to help participants obtain and keep employment. The FSS Counselor plays a primary role in facilitating referrals to outside services, monitoring progress on short and long-term goals, and providing support and encouragement.

In addition to the one-on-one contacts between the FSS Counselor and participants, the program offers opportunities for participants to meet each other, share experiences, and gain additional skills. When an FSS participant begins seeking work, the FSS Counselor provides assistance in job search and job listings. The FSS Counselor also provides the important support and encouragement job seekers need to stay motivated during a job search.

The transition from welfare to work usually includes spells of employment and unemployment; FSS participants are no exception, especially those who have limited skills and little or no work history. These participants may face greater barriers to retaining employment and jobs with low skill requirements may be less stable due to seasonal or repeated layoffs. The FSS Counselor attempts to minimize spells of unemployment by encouraging participants to begin searching for work immediately and by continually working with potential employers to develop new opportunities for FSS participants. They will also help participants target employment opportunities with the potential for long-term stability.

### **C. Coordination of Programs**

The FSS program embraces the entire family structure with its supportive services offered to its residents. Eligible families are connected with appropriate support services and resources in their communities needed to move the family toward economic self-sufficiency.

Extensive resources are available to FSS program participants through public and private agencies. Resources for services such as: childcare, financial counseling, vocational training, GED preparation, and so forth are made available to FSS participants. The Program Coordinating Committee has been developed and services are being implemented through these resources.

The following is a list of services currently available to eligible FSS participants. HACT continues to include resources from many places throughout the community which means resources and services are in a constant state of change. This list is not intended to be exhaustive but only serves as an overview.

- **Case Management:** Families participating in the FSS program will be in regular contact with the FSS Counselor to develop and carryout the ITSP. The Counselor will provide ongoing supervision of the participant's progress and act as an advocate to empower families toward self-sufficiency. In addition, the Counselor will facilitate and monitor other agency involvement and track participant progress through monthly phone calls and quarterly face-to-face reviews, which includes home visits.
- **Housing:** The FSS Counselor will be responsible in not only case management but also the recertification process. This will allow the counselor to monitor any increase in escrow for tracking purposes.
- **Escrow:** Deposits may be made into an escrow account on behalf of a FSS family. Amounts deposited will be calculated in accordance with Federal regulations for the FSS program.

- **Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance:** One Stop Center employment services
- **Department of Health and Social Service:** General assistance
- **CDC of Tampa, Inc.:** Employability skills
- **Hillsborough County Health Department:** Preventative healthcare
- **Precious Bundle Child Care:** Childcare services
- **DACCO:** Substance abuse screening/training
- **Center for Affordable Homeownership:** Basic banking and money management
- **THA – PPS:** Computer training
- **We Care Services:** Healthcare provider
- **Chase:** Financial literacy
- **Tampa Community Health Centers:** Medical Services
- **Superior Pharmacy:** Prescriptive Drugs Workshops
- **Tampa Police Department:** Background check and screening
- **Hillsborough Area Regional Transit:** Bus passes discount
- **Hillsborough Literacy Council:** Taskforce partner
- **Ramlogan’s Driving School:** Driver’s education
- **Hillsborough County Adult and Community:** GED adult basic literacy
- **Hillsborough County Adult Technical Education:** Plumbing, carpentry, A/C repair, welding, childcare, culinary arts
- **International School of Well Drilling:** Well drilling training placement assistance
- **Centre for Women:** Employability skills and life skills
- **Faith Home Health:** Home health companion care training

- **Gulf Marine:** Welding and Shipfitting
- **Sherwin William Paint Company:** Paint training
- **Head Start:** Early childhood education
- **Early Childhood Learning Program:** Early childhood education
- **Planned Parenthood:** Family planning
- **HARTline:** Transportation services
- **Hillsborough County Library System:** Library Services and Computer & Internet Usage
- **Black Business Investment:** Business Development and Mentoring
- **Cathedral of Faith:** Life Skills and Career Development

## **IX. MONITORING PROGRAM PERFORMANCE**

The HACT staff and management are responsible for monitoring and assessing FSS program performance on a regular basis. A number of key indicators are tracked on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis that includes the following:

- Total enrollment
- Number of clients enrolled in any given month
- Amount of escrow deposits in a current month
- Number of escrow deposits in a current month
- % of employed Heads of Household
- % of clients who obtain employment in a current month
- % of clients who are working on GED or in College
- Number of outside referrals made to service providers to support families' interim goals

- Number of in-house counseling sessions
- Number of clients who meet an interim goal in a given month and the kind of goal they reached

In addition to quantitative reports collected monthly, the HACT program management staff will prepare Monthly Narrative Reports that highlight special events and strategic developments. An expanded version of these reports will also be compiled on a semi-annual basis. Also anticipated is an annual recognition of all participants who graduated during THA's fiscal year.

Data regarding FSS enrollment and escrow is part of the SEMAP scoring for the department. This is also monitored monthly to ensure the FSS percentages will pass the FY SEMAP.