

FACT SHEET #11

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) & Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS)



Residents will continue to be able to benefit from “self-sufficiency” programs such as the Family Self-Sufficiency and Resident Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency programs



After RAD Can I Still Participate in FSS or ROSS?

Yes. If you currently participate in these programs at your public housing property, you may continue to participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) programs once your property is converted through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD).



What Is the FSS Program?

FSS is a voluntary program that helps families obtain and maintain living wage employment (meaning jobs that provide enough income to cover a family’s basic needs) by connecting residents to services like childcare, transportation, education, job training, employment counseling, job placement, and substance or alcohol abuse treatment or counseling. If you chose to participate in the FSS program at your public housing property, you entered into a five-year **Contract of Participation**, which identified program rules, activities you would complete, and your program goals.

To operate the program, the public housing authority (PHA) could have applied to HUD for one-year grants to fund a **Service Coordinator** who connected residents to resources. The PHA would have also established an FSS **escrow account** for you. If your earned income increased during the program, you paid increased rent to your PHA like any other resident, but the PHA put the additional rent into your escrow account. The funds placed in the escrow account are available to you upon successful completion of the FSS program.



How Does RAD Impact FSS?

When a public housing property goes through RAD, the source of funding to maintain and operate the property and the rules governing the property switch from HUD’s public housing program to HUD’s Section 8 programs. Through RAD, the PHA can convert public housing to either Project-based Vouchers (PBV) or Project-based Rental Assistance (PBRA). Depending on which program your housing converts to after RAD, the property owners may or may not be able to accept new participants to the FSS program. **However, in**

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either case, if you already participate in FSS at your public housing property, you will still be able to participate in FSS after the RAD conversion.

If your property is converted to Project-Based Vouchers, it is part of HUD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. The HCV program has a FSS program (called HCV FSS) for residents in the same way that the public housing program has a FSS program for residents. If you participate in the FSS program at your public housing property and:

- **The PHA has an HCV FSS program**, the PHA must convert you to the HCV FSS program. In this scenario, the PHA can also enroll new participants in the HCV FSS program if there is space.
- **The PHA does not have an HCV FSS program**, the PHA must establish an HCV FSS program and convert you to the program. In this scenario, the PHA is not required to enroll any new participants in the HCV FSS program.

Generally, for new participants in the HCV FSS program, the rules allow a PHA to terminate your rental assistance if you do not comply with your Contract of Participation. However, if you **currently participate** in the FSS program in public housing and then convert to the HCV FSS program through RAD, the PHA may **not** terminate your rental assistance for this reason.

If your property is converted to Project-Based Rental Assistance and you participate in the FSS program at your public housing property, you will continue to participate in the same FSS program once your housing is converted under RAD. The property owner will continue to provide you with a Service Coordinator and make payments to your escrow account until the end of your Contract of Participation. The owner is not required to enroll new participants but may choose to run its own voluntary FSS program.



What Is the ROSS Program?

The ROSS program provides supportive services and empowerment activities at public housing properties. ROSS **Service Coordinators** work with families to increase their income and become self-sufficient, and with elderly residents or residents with disabilities to improve living conditions so they can age-in-place. In public housing, PHAs, resident councils, and nonprofit organizations can apply to HUD for three-year grants to fund ROSS Service Coordinators.



How Does RAD Impact ROSS?

If your public housing property currently has a ROSS Service Coordinator and your property converts through RAD, you may continue participating in the ROSS program until the three-year grant funding is spent. Once the funds are spent, the property can no longer be served by ROSS funding because Section 8 does not have a ROSS program.