



*Achieving Financial Independence*

# Family Self-Sufficiency Program

 **Idaho Housing  
and Finance**  
Association  
[www.ihfa.org](http://www.ihfa.org)

565 W. Myrtle  
Boise, Idaho 83707-1899  
208-331-4796  
Toll-Free 1-800-458-2791

## **What is FSS?**

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) is a voluntary program that helps Idaho households become economically independent. This program helps families and individuals (participants) learn to take control of their lives and achieve complete financial independence within five years. Participation in the FSS Program does not affect a household's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) subsidy.

## **Who is eligible?**

Anyone currently participating in Idaho Housing and Finance Association's (IHFA) HCV program who has employment goals and wishes to achieve financial independence may enroll.

## **How does FSS work?**

Each head of household voluntarily enrolls in the FSS program by completing an application, signing a Contract of Participation (contract) and developing an Individual Training and Service Plan (plan) with an IHFA FSS Specialist. The contract and corresponding plan outline the responsibilities of the family and IHFA to meet financial and employment goals.

The FSS Specialist and the participant work together to define and choose career and financial goals, often including homeownership. Working as a team, the participants and the FSS Specialist identify and eliminate obstacles to financial independence and self-sufficiency.

FSS Specialists help participants develop a financial plan that includes tracking spending, developing a budget and spending plan, reading a credit report and developing a plan for credit repair.

### What about support services?

The participant and FSS Specialist develop economic independence strategies with local social service providers. FSS participants can expect help from their FSS Specialist or other community service providers to resolve the following needs:

- Child care
- Transportation
- Education
- Job search and job retention skills
- Financial planning, including credit repair
- Homeownership counseling

Participants are responsible for requesting assistance from the appropriate agency and completing any requirements they may have.

### What is the FSS escrow savings account?

Another benefit participants receive is an interest-bearing escrow (savings) account. This accrues as the household's portion of rent increases because of an increase in earned income. The account is held until the participant successfully completes the contract. The contract can be completed in two ways:

- When the participant has completed all their goals before the end of their contract and has been free of welfare benefits (Temporary Assistance for Families in Idaho – this does not include food stamps, medical assistance or child care assistance) for 12 consecutive months, OR
- When 30% of the participant's adjusted income exceeds the HUD Fair Market Rent for the household.

Once the participant has successfully completed the contract, the escrow account may be used as they wish. If the participant does not report income changes or pay their portion of rent on time it could adversely affect their escrow account.

The escrow account and the accrued interest are not required to be reported to any other agency since it is not a resource or property for the participant until successful completion of the contract. In addition, the Internal Revenue Service has ruled that FSS escrow payments are nontaxable.

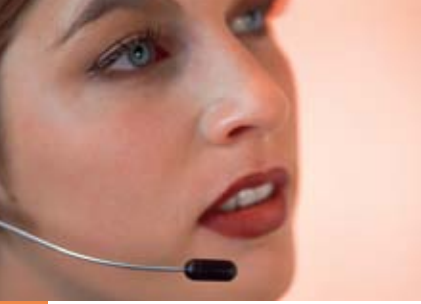
### What are my responsibilities?

FSS participants must complete and sign a contract and have a current, signed plan. The contract and the attached plan provide a framework for the participant's goals and describe the specific activities they must complete. Each participant has up to five years to reach economic self-sufficiency. The contract and all the activities on the plan must be completed to access the escrow savings account.

The participant is also responsible for maintaining contact with their FSS Specialist and following through on other commitments established in the contract and plan.

A participant's plan is revised and updated as the household moves towards economic self-sufficiency. The program offers households the flexibility to adjust their plan for emergencies and unusual situations.





## How do I apply for FSS?

To make an appointment and learn more about FSS, contact the local IHFA Branch Office in your area:

### Coeur d'Alene Branch

Harbor Plaza  
610 W Hubbard, Bay 219  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
(208) 667-3380  
Toll-Free 1-866-621-2994

### Idaho Falls Branch

506 S. Woodruff Ave.  
Idaho Falls, ID 83401  
(208) 522-6002  
Toll-Free 1-866-684-3756

### Lewiston Branch

215 Tenth Street, Suite 101  
P.O. Box 342  
Lewiston, ID 83501  
(208) 743-0251  
Toll-Free 1-866-566-1727

### Twin Falls Branch

844 Washington St. N., Suite 300  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
(208) 734-8531  
Toll-Free 1-866-234-3435

Or you may contact:

### Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator

Idaho Housing and Finance Association  
P.O. Box 7899  
Boise, ID 83707-1899  
(208) 331-4796  
Toll-Free 1-800-458-2791  
fss@ihfa.org

Idaho Housing and Finance Association, a financial services and housing business organization, provides funding for affordable housing in communities where it is most needed and when economically feasible. IHFA is a self-supporting corporation that must generate all revenue necessary to cover the cost of its operations. It does this by earning fees for work performed and does not use any state-appropriated funds for its operations.



### Family Self-Sufficiency Program

P.O. Box 7899  
(565 W. Myrtle)  
Boise, Idaho 83707-1899  
208-331-4796  
1-800-458-2791  
Hearing Impaired  
1-800-545-1833, Ext. 400  
[www.ihfa.org](http://www.ihfa.org)

