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# Family Self-Sufficiency Newsletter

Spring 2024



## Welcome Spring!

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We hope you are as excited as we are to see the flowers blooming, green grass growing, and sun shining a (little) bit more. We are proud of your commitment to self-growth and economic stability by continuing in the FSS program, and we hope this will be a season of new beginnings for you.

We are having an info session on what the Family Self-Sufficiency program is on **Wednesday, April 3rd, 2024 from 12:00-1:30pm** at the **Salem Public Library in the Loucks Auditorium.**

This session is for Salem Housing Authority Section 8 Voucher Holders or Public Housing residents who would like to know more about the FSS program, the target audience being those who are not already enrolled in the program. Feel free to spread the word to any Salem Housing Authority Section 8 Voucher Holders or Public Housing residents who are not in the FSS program. There will also be light refreshments and snacks!

If you would like to come and have a refresher of what the FSS program is and connect with our FSS team, you are also welcome to come!

**Come visit us at Salem Housing Authority, located at 360 Church St SE, Salem, OR 97301. We are open Monday-Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm and closed between 12:00pm - 1:00pm.**





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## Get Involved with DevNW!

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Did you know current FSS participants have access to a free year long membership with DevNW? (Normally \$75). DevNW aims to help people toward quality affordable housing, financial/economic opportunity, small business development and more. They provide education, counseling, financial tools, and homeownership education. With a DevNW membership you will get access to unlimited one-on-one financial and homeownership counseling. With a membership, you receive:

- Access to Financial Foundations and Homebuying Foundations classes
- Access to other in-person or web-based personal finance workshops, including on: investing, tackling student debt, social security planning, couponing, wills & life planning, and starting a side hustle.
- Access to other in-person or web-based homeownership workshops, including: home maintenance, home energy efficiency, and buying an investment property.
- Access to Youth Financial Foundations, a personal finance class for 16+ year-old young adults in your household.

Please reach out to your FSS coordinator if you are interested in beginning a DevNW membership so they can refer you.

### FSS PROGRAM REMINDERS

- Maintain consistent contact with your FSS coordinator-at least quarterly
- In order to graduate and receive any escrow savings you have accrued, you must be employed, TANF free, have accomplished any other goals in your contract, and be in good standing with your lease by the end of your contract
- Your escrow savings account is created when your earned income **increases** from your **baseline** earned income from when you started the program. More money is put into your escrow account as your earned income increases.
- You are not required to leave Section 8 or Public Housing when you graduate the program



## First Friday Art Walk

Taking place from 5 to 8 p.m. on the first Friday of every month, it is a free, leisurely opportunity to explore the heart of Salem and discover new local shops, artwork, crafters and more. The First Friday Art Walk aims to promote local businesses, emerging artists and engagement with our downtown community. The next one coming up will be **Friday April 5th, 2024**. Find all the details at [facebook.com/SalemArtWalk](https://facebook.com/SalemArtWalk) or follow [Salemartwalk](#) on Instagram for more details and updates on what businesses are participating that month.

Each month includes a variety of different businesses offering specials, art to view, activities and more. You also get to participate in a raffle. To take part in the raffle, pick up a passport and collect stamps from any of the participating businesses. Then turn in your completed passport to enter a raffle to win a prize (usually a basket full of items from all the participating businesses).



## Infinity Room Open Mic and Poetry Night

The Infinity Room offers a Music and Poetry Open Mic on some Thursdays. Check out upcoming events at their [calendar](#). They welcome all types of musicians and poets. There is no cover, but food and drink is available for purchase before and during the show. Doors and in-person sign-up at 6:30, performances starting at 7pm, all ages. **210 Liberty St SE #150, Salem, OR 97301.**

If your open mic act will require any special equipment or tech, please email ahead of the Infinity Room at [music@irsalem.com](mailto:music@irsalem.com) ahead of time.



## Tinker Tech Tuesdays for Kids at the Library

Kids through grade 5 with an adult are invited to explore a variety of STEAM activities in the Salem Public library. Check out a kit at the Children's Desk from a variety of choices for a 30-minute session in Story Room B. A CCRLS library card is required. Kits are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Most kits are recommended for grades 2 - 5, but there is also a small selection of kits available for younger children.

Every Tuesday at 4:30pm at Salem Public Library 585 Liberty St SE, Salem, OR 97301

# New FSS Coordinator - Welcome Kim!



Hello, my name is Kim, and I am thrilled to introduce myself to you as your Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator with Salem Housing Authority. I look forward to getting to know you, your household, and learn about the goals you are wanting to achieve.

My career experience involves housing in various aspects of society. Including the elderly, domestic violence survivors, and folks with disabilities. I am passionate about serving the community and ensuring that my clients receive the most thorough case management support.

I encourage you to reach out to me at any time, my job is to serve you and your household! Being a client of mine, you will receive judgement free support and advocacy.

I cannot wait to meet you where you are and assist you with navigating your future and celebrating your achievements.

## NEW CONTRACT OF PARTICIPATION

Switching to the new COP (Contract of Participation) will benefit you in many aspects of the program and help you graduate when the time comes. Please reach out to your FSS coordinator if you have not yet made the switch over. Here are a list of the benefits included with the new Contract:

<b>New CoP vs Old CoP</b> Please read the full contract for more information. This is just a snapshot of the changes. This is not a comprehensive list that may affect you.		
Policy	New CoP	Old CoP
"Welfare Free"	All household members MUST be "welfare free" by the end of the contract term.	All Household members must be "welfare free" 12 months PRIOR to graduation.
Designated head of FSS Family <i>*Previously Head of Household</i>	All household members must agree to who is the designated Head of FSS Family. The Head of FSS Family signs ONE CoP & ITSP	S-8 Voucher Holder or HoH Public Housing Resident is the designated FSS HoH.
Who can enroll	Any ONE adult household member may enroll in FSS	Only head of household may enroll in FSS
Base CoP [Term of Contract]	The initial CoP end date will be longer than 5 years	Base Contract is only 5 years
Disbursement of Escrow in Cases of Contract Termination	May receive escrow if: 1) Services that are integral to the FSS family's advancement towards self-sufficiency are unavailable, 2) You become permanently disabled and are unable to work, 3) you port out and can't continue in FSS.	MUST complete all FSS goals to receive escrow.
"Good Cause"	Expands reasons for FSS extension beyond illness, job loss, death. Example: Contract is expiring and goals have not been met.	May ONLY extend in FSS for the following circumstance: illness, job loss, or death.
Monthly Escrow	Removes cap on escrow for families making between 50% and 80% AMI. <i>*Monthly escrow can continue to grow between 50% and 80% AMI.</i>	Families will only escrow between 50% and 80% AMI.

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## CHRISTINA-FSS GRADUATE SUCCESS STORY



Christina enrolled in FSS in 2020 on TANF, not working and with little motivation or belief that she could rise above her past and current financial and emotional barriers.

During her three years in FSS, Christina found the motivation, belief and tools to become employed, create a savings outside of her escrow, purchase a car, pay off debt and accomplish her primary goal of purchasing a forever home to raise her children.

Christina has said that once she moved out of her own way, and decided to do the work, she found hope of a better future. Christina graduated with belief in herself and escrow savings that she was able to use towards the down payment on her forever home.

Christina states:

*"I honestly think this program helped me become a better person, it is so worth it. Put in the work and you'll thank yourself later."*

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Please feel free to contact the FSS team at [SHAFSS@Salemhousingor.com](mailto:SHAFSS@Salemhousingor.com) or call us at 503-588-6368 so you can keep growing on your path to success!

**We hope to see you soon!**

