

Multifamily FSS Webinar Series

Webinar #2

Promising Practices for Running an FSS Program

Danielle Garcia, HUD

Ann Lentell, Compass Working Capital

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October 19, 2016

Multifamily FSS Webinar Schedule

Date	Topic
October 11, 2016 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. ET	Launching a Multifamily FSS Program
October 19, 2016 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. ET	Promising Practices for Running an FSS Program
October 26, 2016 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. ET	Complying with MF FSS Program Requirements


Agenda

Overview of two established FSS programs

Promising practices:

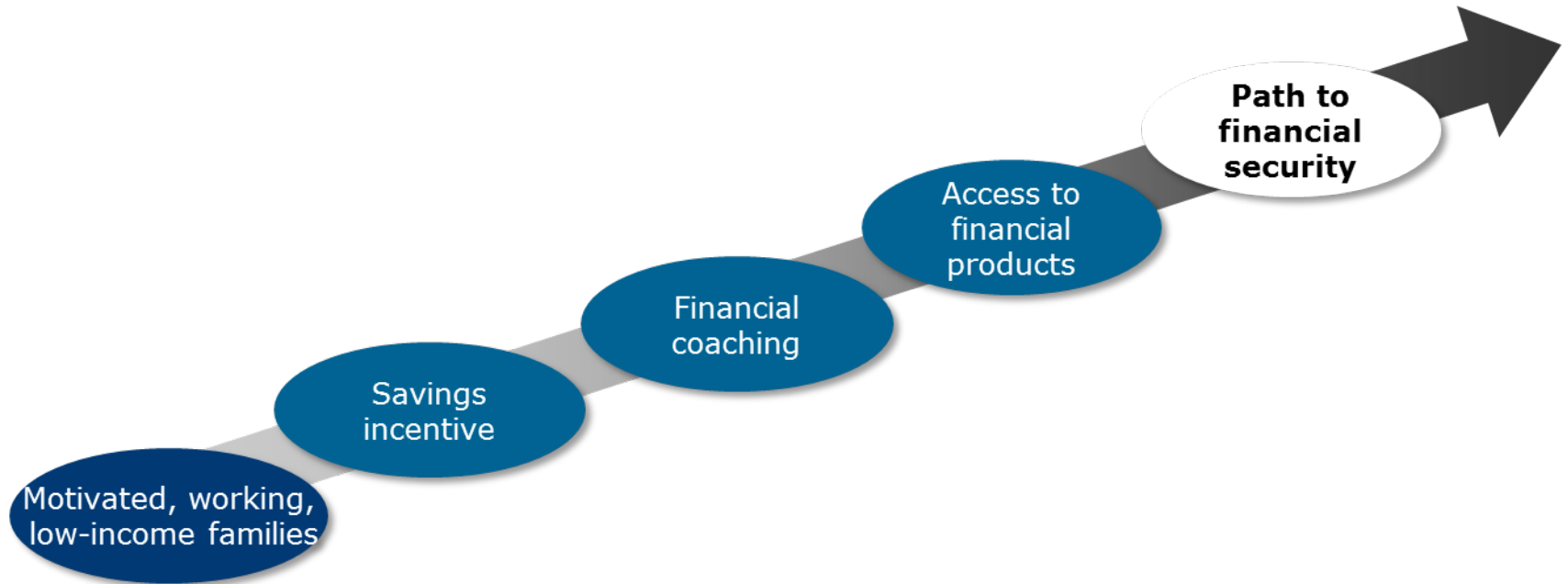
1. Engaging residents (marketing FSS)
2. Working with participants (case management / coaching)
3. Helping participants increase their earnings
4. Helping participants build assets and financial capability

Overview of two established FSS programs



Compass Working Capital

Compass is a nonprofit financial services organization that empowers low-income families to build savings and financial capabilities as a pathway out of poverty.

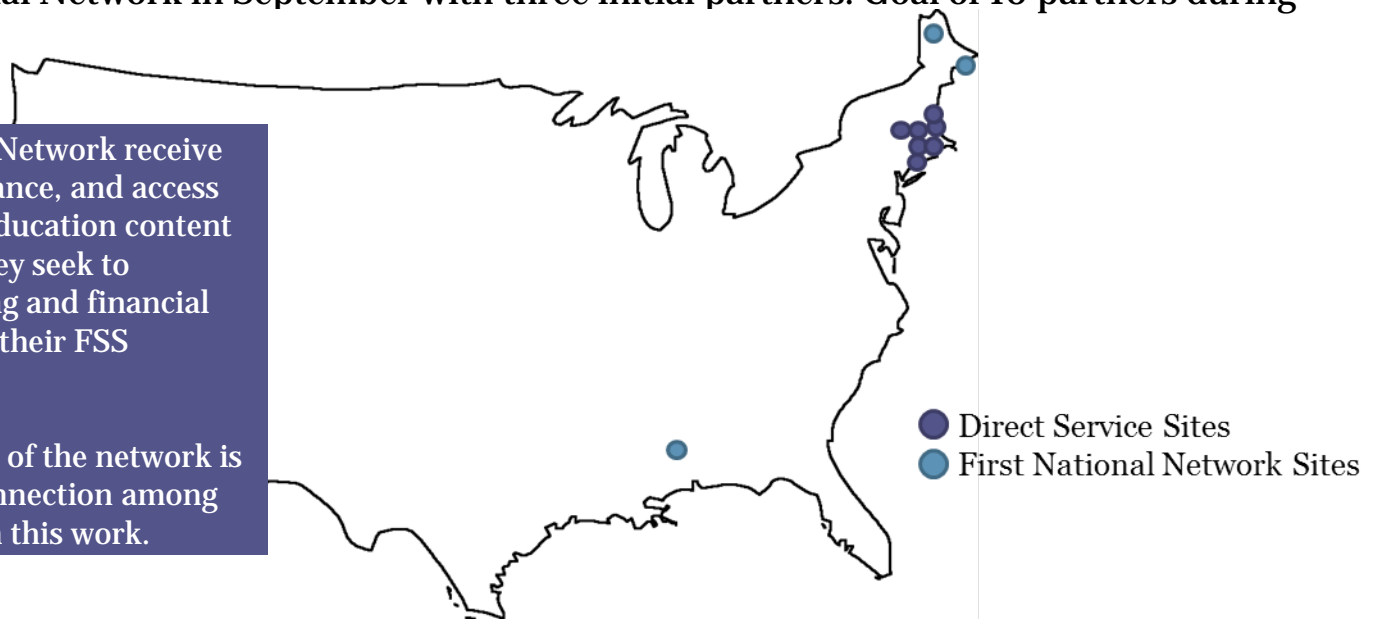


Where We Are

- Headquartered in Boston, MA.
- Directly serving over 1,000 FSS participants in partnership with two public housing authorities, one nonprofit housing agency, and two multi-family owners across three states in New England.
- Launched National Network in September with three initial partners. Goal of 10 partners during three-year pilot

Partners in the National Network receive training, technical assistance, and access to Compass's financial education content and coaching tools, as they seek to incorporate asset-building and financial capability strategies into their FSS program.

A critical, additional goal of the network is to foster learning and connection among organizations involved in this work.



Outcomes

Compass combines the powerful savings incentive in FSS with our expertise in personal finance for low-income families to deliver strong, data-driven program model, with promising early results and outcomes.

Average client results, after two years:

Income	63% increase income, by average of >\$12,000
Credit	64% increase credit score, by average of 50 points
Debt	51% reduce debt, by average of \$5,400
Collection Debt	77% decrease collection debt, by average of \$2,500
Savings	75% save in program account, with average savings of \$2,800



Compass FSS Program Graduate: Rosa



About Rosa:

- Mother of two children
- Works as an Outreach Coordinator for a senior services agency
- Resident of Lynn, MA
- Section 8 resident beginning in 2001
- Enrolled in FSS in 2013

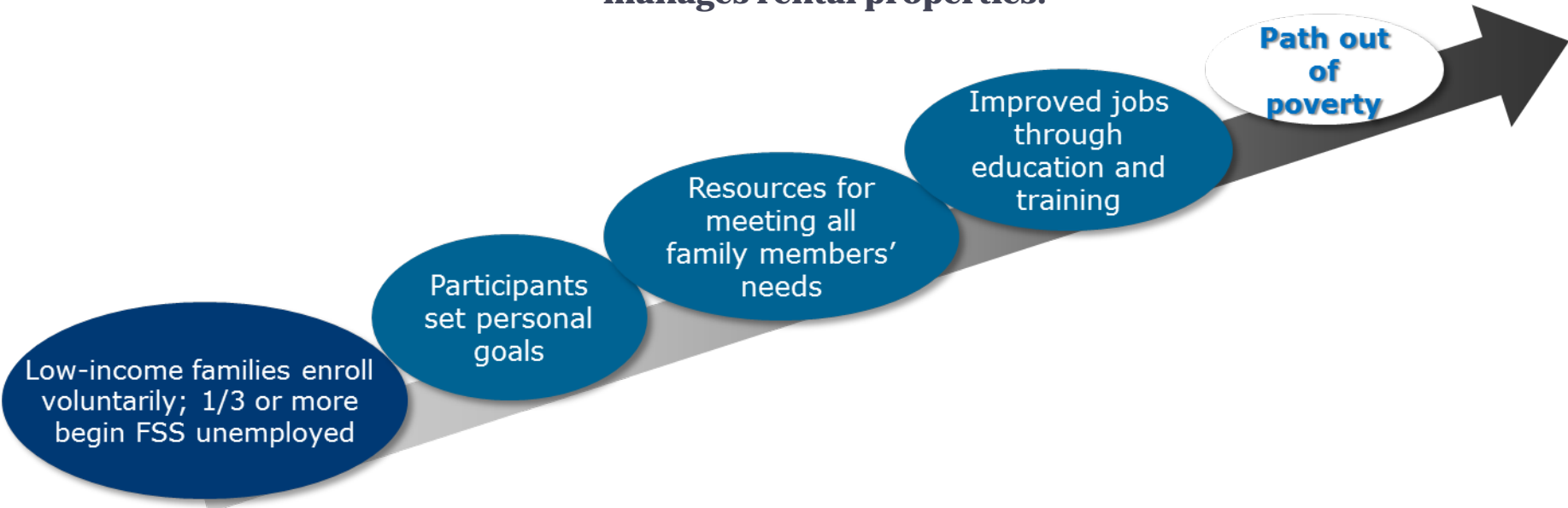
Program Accomplishments at Graduation:

- Increased credit score, paid off bills, and built savings.
- Qualified for a mortgage for a two-family home.
- Graduated FSS in two years as she gave up her voucher and purchased her own home in Lynn.

“Now that I own my own house, I feel like I can breathe. I feel free. I feel like myself. When I see my house, I laugh. I feel so good when I come home and turn the key.”

Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) at the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) in Montgomery County, Maryland

HOC is Montgomery County, Maryland's Public Housing Agency, which provides affordable housing and supportive services, develops real estate and manages rental properties.



Montgomery County, MD, FSS Program

Coordinated by Nancy Scull from inception February 1993 to March 2015; one of the largest FSS programs with 366 slots for HCV (Section 8) families and 75 for PH families, a total of 441.

Outcomes:

- Nearly 900 successful program graduates, all earning livable wages; on average they more than doubled their earnings; most improved their money management and credit scores
- 1/3 of graduates began the program unemployed or receiving welfare cash assistance; 82% were single parents; about 15% are foreign born and needed to improve English skills
- 15% of graduates lacked a high school diploma or GED when they began FSS; 95% took education or vocational training, and 71% completed certifications/degrees while in FSS
- 17% of graduates purchased homes, 1/4 of whom began FSS unemployed or receiving welfare cash assistance
- Graduates accrued an average of nearly \$11,000 in escrow savings, due to increased earnings and higher rent payments during FSS participation

Montgomery County, MD, FSS Program

About Yvette Hammond, an HOC FSS graduate:

- Graduated from high school in 1999, a mediocre student
- Lost her dad while in high school; became a mother in her teens
- Had low-wage jobs, survived day-to-day, paycheck-to-paycheck

Achievements through FSS:

- Began Community College in 2007; used Pell Grant and scholarships
- Began Registered Nurse (RN) program in 2009; employed full-time
- Completed her RN in 2011 with honors and her BSN in 2014
- RN job at a community health organization now; working on a Masters in Health Services Leadership and Management
- Her high credit score continues; she will purchase a home within 2 years with her son (16 years old, junior in high school)



Engaging residents

Marketing and outreach

Marketing and Outreach

ASPIRATIONAL FOCUS

tapping into clients' deeply-held aspirations and dreams for themselves and their families

SURROUND-SOUND STRATEGY

use multiple touch points for your message

ORIENTATION

lead first with clients' hopes and dreams and second with program specifics

FINANCIAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

content covers budgeting and goal-setting, credit and debt, and savings and asset-building

RESIDENT AMBASSADORS

a personal referral from a program participant can be highly effective

Marketing Examples



Every **dream** worth building
takes effort.

ORIENTATION:

Tuesday October 7 | 6 pm

The Nonprofit Center, 89 South Street, Boston 02111

(one block from South Station)

Marketing Examples

A new group of savers is forming...



TO SIGN UP: call or text your name to 413-301-9810

**Save the
date!**

Join us:

**Saturday
April 16th
12:00 pm**

or

**Wednesday
April 27th
5:00 pm**

in the
Bay Meadow
Community Room

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Marketing Examples

**Worried about your
rent increasing?**

Get the chance to save part of your
rent through the **Compass FSS Program** !
Don't miss out!

Call now! 413-301-9810

Call now! 413-301-9810

Work **one-on-one** with a coach to...
buy a **home**,
start your own **business**,
increase your credit score,
send your child to **college**,
achieve your **financial goals!**

Call to learn more!

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SIGN-UP BEFORE RECERTIFICATION!

Outreach and Recruitment

- Written materials and HOC's website:
 - Distribute FSS Orientation fliers in English and Spanish to HOC's offices and to Housing Specialists and Resident Services staff; put fliers in HOC's monthly recertification mailings
 - Send fliers to our partner TANF agency's offices where they meet with clients
 - Write articles with photos in HOC's client newsletters about FSS participants' stories
 - Post FSS Program information on HOC's website
- Facilitate regular monthly Orientations for eligible residents considering enrollment in FSS:
 - PowerPoint presentation with discussion, Q and A with handouts about Next Steps
 - An FSS participant or graduate tells her/his story of challenges, success and FSS case manager's encouragement, coaching and support that assist all family members
- Word of mouth among participants and graduates telling other residents about FSS support

Working with residents

Case management / coaching

Working with Residents

- HOC's FSS assigned case manager/coach begins by building a relationship of trust:
 - Nonjudgmental active listening: Talk to the Head of Household (HOH) applicant about his/her reasons for wanting FSS; ask about history of education, employment, health/mental health; assess strengths and barriers; identify resources needed for other family members in the household
 - The HOH sets her/his personal short- and long-term goals, which are written into the FSS Contract of Participation's Individual Training and Service Plan (ITSP); goals are to be in three areas—employment, education/vocational training, and financial stability/planning; service needs of other family members are also put in the ITSP

Working with Residents

- Coaching and case management continue during the program to help participants:
 - Gain self-confidence and determination to face change and not give up on their goals
 - Problem-solve and be accountable as they work toward goals
- There is ongoing discussion, coaching and re-assessment of progress, barriers/concerns/challenges and needs throughout FSS participation
- FSS case managers/coaches or volunteer mentors meet in person monthly with each participant in order to maintain a strong supportive and trusting relationship; email and phone contact is more often as needed
- Volunteer tutors, college interns and Federal Work Study students also help participants progress toward their education and training goals

Working with Residents

COACHING MODEL

clients are experts in their own lives and goals

ESTABLISHING TRUST

clients are creative, resourceful and whole

MOTIVATING CLIENTS

sometimes clients need help uncovering their own capabilities

GOALS SHOULD BE S.M.A.R.T.

specific, measurable, actionable, reasonable, and time-bound

Helping participants increase their earnings



Increasing Earnings

- Higher education and training move participants toward higher earnings. HOC's FSS program encourages each participant to work toward higher education and/or vocational training as desired and appropriate for the participant's chosen employment goal—for example:
 - If a participant lacks high school or GED completion, we encourage him or her to take GED classes and/or to work with one of our volunteer tutors. GED classes are intimidating to our mostly middle-age participants, so many prefer a volunteer tutor relationship.
 - Volunteer tutors help with college/vocational courses and English skills
- We sought educational/training funds from our County government, and because of our successful outcomes, the County gave us funding each year.

Increasing Earnings

GATHER DETAILS

understand a client's work history and experience before identifying career goals

CAREER GOALS

identify a client's aspirations as well as needs for their income

IDENTIFY NEXT STEPS

eliminate obstacles and utilize resource partners in a financially holistic way

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

increasing one's income can take many shapes and sizes

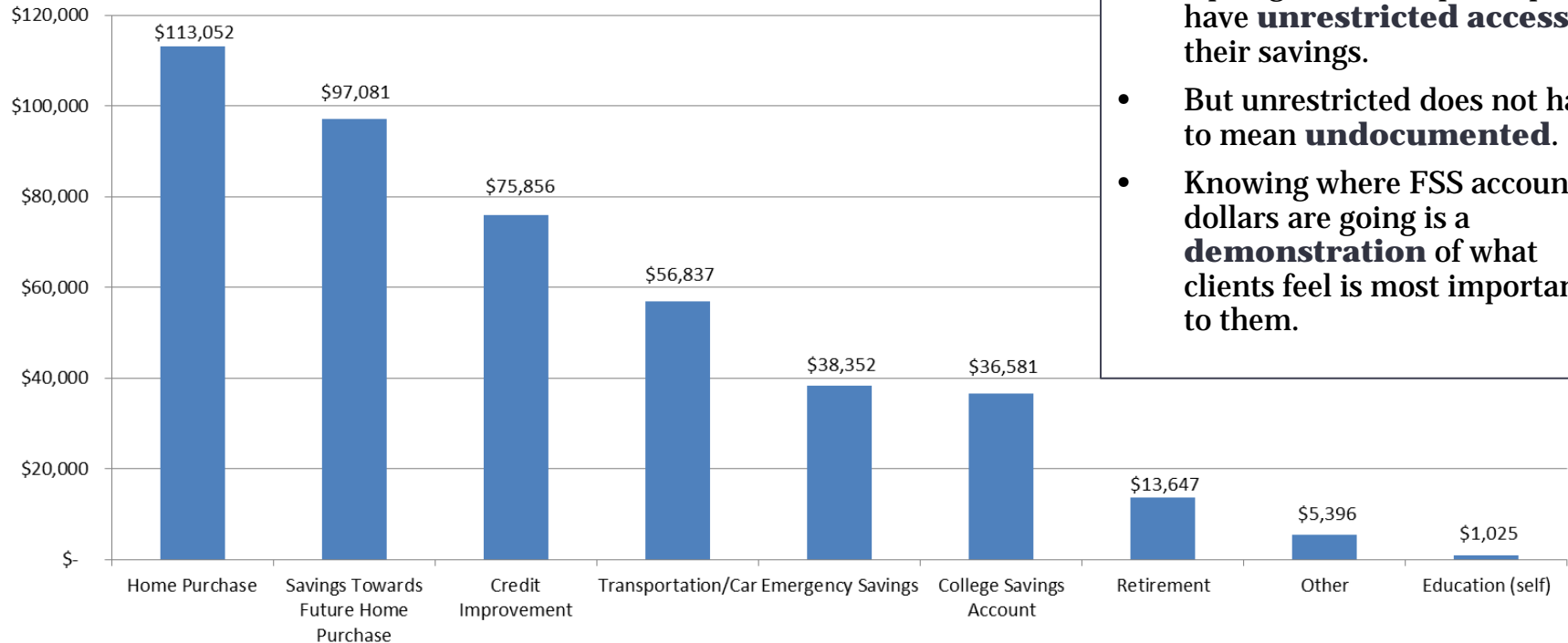
Helping participants build assets and financial capability



Why the FSS Account Matters

- Savings and assets are **critical platforms** for accessing other wealth-building vehicles.
- Importantly, savings build **hope!**
- The FSS account has **advantages** specific to low-income families.
- The restrictive feature gives it more stickiness towards **long-term goals**.

Where Compass Graduates Use Their FSS Account



- Upon graduation, participants have **unrestricted access** to their savings.
- But unrestricted does not have to mean **undocumented**.
- Knowing where FSS account dollars are going is a **demonstration** of what clients feel is most important to them.

Integrating Financial Capability into FSS

Compass Financial Coaches help clients:

- Set **personally meaningful goals** and take small steps to achieve them.
- Create and stick to a **budget**.
- Pay down **debt** and increase their **credit score**.
- Access **mainstream financial products**.
- Build a **savings habit**.

Building Financial Capability

- From the beginning of enrollment, HOC's FSS participants discuss their budget, debt and credit issues with their coach/case manager or volunteer mentor, who is like a case manager. Budgeting tools and follow-up are provided, and all participants are encouraged to meet with HOC's financial counselor or an outside counselor both initially and continually as needed throughout the program.
- Escrow account accruals are also highlighted as participants obtain or increase earnings, and individualized escrow statements are provided annually according to HUD requirements. We discouraged interim escrow withdrawals, but they are allowed when all other resources have been tried and an individual's goals cannot otherwise be achieved. Discussions also encourage participants to plan carefully how they will use escrow savings upon successful completion of goals.
- Participants are counseled about other ways to grow their financial capability and increase assets, and they are offered Individual Development Account (IDA) program participation. IDA goals may be for education, development/improvement of a business, or home purchase.
- Some participants begin FSS with a good sense of money management and long-term asset building, but most need guidance and help to improve their decision-making.

Promising Practices in FSS

**Nancy Scull,
Consultant**

**Sherry Riva, Founder & Exec. Dir.
Ann Lentell, Dir. of Programs**

Former FSS Program
Coordinator, Housing
Opportunities
Commission (HOC) in
Montgomery County, MD

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