

Planned Success

Free Offer

Begin to free yourself at once by doing all that is possible with the means you have, and as you proceed in this spirit the way will open for you to do more.

- Robert Collier

We all get excited about the possibility of receiving something for free. We will man the phone and stake out the radio to win free tickets to a concert or a play. We just can't help entering sweepstakes at the promise of a free trip or a new car. I have heard that the best things in life are free, but I believe that there is a certain satisfaction and pride in something strived for and earned. The Family Self Sufficiency Program combines the excitement of a free offer and the satisfaction and pride of achievement.

This satisfaction comes from knowing a goal has been achieved and a life has been altered and improved either by gaining a living wage, starting your own business, and or completing your education. How does this happen? When you join the FSS program you have access to Housing Counselors who are dedicated to helping you declare and achieve your career, academic and financial goals. Housing Counselors provide encouragement, support, and resources to help their clients reach their goals. We are committed to our client's success. One could compare Housing Counselors with Life coaches. Life Coaches typically charge \$250.00 to \$1,000.00 per month for their services. Our services are **free**.

In addition to the services of a Housing Counselor, the FSS program has a financial incentive for joining the program. The escrow account is a savings tool that rewards clients for working full time and receiving earned income. Participants who earn an escrow account are able upon successful graduation to use the funds they have been earning for homeownership, continuing education, and other worthwhile causes. So how can you learn more and take advantage of this "Free Offer"?

Here's your Invitation!

The Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa invites potential clients and current FSS participants to come out to our **Super Saturday** on **February 19, 2005 from 11:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.** This event will allow you to learn more about the FSS program, receive information from the many community resources we partner with, have your income taxes completed and e-filed for free, enter a raffle (more free stuff!), meet the Housing Counselors and allow us to meet you. Please **RSVP at 925-957-7005**. Remember, this invitation is open to current FSS participants and any Housing Choice Voucher client who wants to know more about FSS. We hope to hear from you. We hope to meet you. Call us 925-957-7005.



This publication is brought to you by the Housing Services Team

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We Admire!

We Admire Darice, Angela, Shawntee, and Nancy.



Darice dual majored and received two degrees in Business Administration and Business Management respectively

Angela graduated with an escrow account that helped her purchase her new home

Shawntee graduated with a Bachelor's degree majoring in the Humanities and also received an AA degree in Administrative Justice and Liberal Studies

Nancy graduated with an escrow and is working towards homeownership

Do You Know How to Graduate ?

Many of you will be ready to graduate from the FSS program soon. We are very proud of each of you for the progress you are making towards achieving your goals and for the contributions being made into the FSS Escrow account. Let's review how to graduate successfully from the Family Self Sufficiency Program.

In order to graduate you must :

- Work full time
- Be off all Welfare Assistance 12 months prior to graduation
- Have achieved your goal
- Request to graduate prior to going off Housing Assistance

Money Tips from the Web

- www.wife.org
- www.frugalfamilynetwork.com
- www.stretcher.com
- www.cheapskatemonthly.com
- www.myvesta.org
- www.mymoney.gov
- www.betterbudgeting.com



FREE OFFER

Free Income Tax Preparation!

Vita stands for Voluntary Income Tax Assistance. The Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa will be hosting a VITA Site at the Housing Authority Office at 1805 Arnold Drive in Martinez. You are invited to come out and have your taxes completed and e-filed for free! . The site is open two Saturday's a month from February to April. Please contact Regina Davis at 925-957-7080 or at rdavis@contracostahousing.org for further information.

What's Offered in your Community

- **OfficeTeam 1-800-804-8367**

Office Team is the world 's leading staffing service specializing in the temporary placement of highly skilled office and administrative support professional, ranging from administrative and executive assistants to customer service representatives and receptionists. OFFICETEAM has more than 300 locations in North America, Europe, and Australia, and offers online job search services at www.officeteam.com For more information, call 800-804-8367.

- **CC- MATCH (Moving Assets Towards Community Hands)**

Offers Financial Education Classes though out the year. Classes are once a week for five weeks. Usually classes are scheduled in the evenings. For further information contact Community Housing Development Corporation, Attn: CC MATCH Program, 1535A Third Street, Richmond, CA 94801, 510-412-9260

- **Proud Fathers**

The Family Stress Center presents Thursday Night Support Groups for Fathers. Proud Father's is a program that addresses Parenting, Family Planning, Anger Management, Child Support/Custody and Employment Issues. Contact Robert Luna at 925-827-0212 ext 124.

- **Free Credit Reports**

A new law guarantees consumers a free annual Credit Report. You can request your free credit report via secure internet site, by phone, or by mail. Contact information is as follows:

1. Internet Address: www.annualcreditreport.com
2. Toll Free number : 1-877-322-8228
3. Mailing Address: Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

- **OPTIC**

Provides computer, office, and life skills essential for success in today's workplace. Ideal candidates are low-income and unemployed, motivated to change their lives, and can commit to a full-time program. Next set of classes begin May 16, 2005. Applications are due in April. Please Contact **Natalie Georgia at 925-776-1133** for further information.

Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa

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Address Label Here

Achieve To Succeed!

We're On The Web!
Contracostahousing.org

How to Interview

Although we may be well qualified for the position we are applying for, no one will ever know this if we do not shine quickly in the interview process. How do we make a lasting impression on someone we never met in a short period of time? Here are a few suggestions.

Show up on time. Actually it is in your best interest to show up a few minutes early.

Do your homework. Know about the company and the position you are applying for.

Dress to impress. Show respect for the process by looking your best. Make sure you check for stains, missed buttons, and loose threads. Don't forget interview hair and nails. Allow nothing to distract from your presentation.

Rehearse. There are books and websites galore devoted to interview questions and how to answer them. Rehearse your answers so that they become natural to you. Practice in front of a mirror or with a friend.

Know your own history. Prepare a success story. Be able to tell about a time you provided value to a project or provided a creative solution to your company's problem.

Speak up and be well spoken. To achieve this you must practice. It helps to be well read and informed about the world around you. Tape yourself and listen to see how you sound to others.

Be ready. Ask questions about the company culture and what would be expected of you. Make it clear that you are interested in the position you are applying for. In the first interview, **never** ask about salary and benefits unless the prospective employer brings it up first.

Relax. Smile, make eye contact, and thank the employer for his/her time.

Follow up. Send an appropriate thank you letter, again letting the employer know that you are interested in the position.