

SPRING 2025

PORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

NEWSLETTER



It's Scholarships Time!

Spring is here! That means it's time to start applying for scholarships! There are a variety of scholarship opportunities available, and details can be found below and on the Portland Housing Authority website, under "Tenant Services." Whether you're heading to college, vocational school, or a certification program, there may be funding available to help you on your journey.

We know applying for scholarships can feel overwhelming. If you need help with your application, reach out to your local study center for guidance and support. And while you're thinking about scholarships, you're probably also thinking about financial aid. The financial aid process has changed and has become a bit trickier to navigate. If you need help understanding or completing your FAFSA applications, the study center staff are here to assist you. Be sure to read the application requirements! Take advantage of these opportunities and get the support you need to make your education dreams a reality!



Former Scholarship Recipients

Here's what you'll find in this issue:

- Scholarship Highlights
- Calendar of Events
- Family Self-Sufficiency Information and Program Highlights
- CA\$H Tax Preparation
- College Access and Financial Support
- Summer opportunities for youth

Thomas Valleau Scholarship (Formerly know as the PHA Scholarship)

- Applications are due May 15th each year. Awards up to \$5,000.
- Open to any PHA resident on the lease headed to higher education in the fall.

NERC/NAHRO Allan R. Andrews Scholarship

- Applications are due May 5th, 2025.
 - You must send your complete application to PHA at least 2 weeks before the listed due date to be considered. PHA can only send 5 applications.
- No scholarship will be less than \$1,000.

NAHRO National Merit Scholarship

- You must apply for and receive the NERC/NAHRO Allen R. Andrews Scholarship and be chosen by NERC to be considered for the NAHRO Merit Scholarship.
- Individual applications are not accepted.

Housing Authority Insurance Group Resident Scholarship

- Applications are due Friday May 30th, 2025.
- Twenty \$6,000 scholarships will be awarded by lottery.

Maine Association of Public Housing Directors Scholarship

- Applications are typically due in April when available.
- Number and amount of awards depends on funding.

PHA Resident Services is here to help if you have any questions or need copies of applications sent to you. Contact Emily by email at efitch@porthouse.org or by call or text at (207) 221-8063

PHA Notifications: Stay in the know about emergencies, office closures, events, scholarships, opportunities, and other critical messages. Use the QR code to sign up or visit www.porthouse.org/list



March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 Sagamore Food Share 9-10am Portland Rec Summer Camp Registration Opens	4 CA\$H Scan & Go Sagamore	5 East Bayside Mobile Food Pantry	6	7	8
9	10 Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	11 CA\$H Scan & Go Sagamore Riverton Food Share 10-11am	12 Washington Gardens Mobile Food Pantry	13	14	15
16	17 Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	18 CA\$H Scan & Go Sagamore FSS Orientation 5:00 pm	19 Talbot School Resource Fair 12-5pm	20	21	22
23	24 Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	25 CA\$H Scan & Go Sagamore Riverton Food Share 10-11am	26	27	28	29
30 CHEETA Applications Close SV/RP/KP	31	Sagamore Food share, 21 Popham Street Riverton Food Share, 53 Riverton Drive East Bayside Mobile Pantry, 81 East Oxford Street Washington Gardens Mobile Pantry, End of Pembroke Street				

April 2025

		Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	1	CA\$H Scan & Go Sagamore	2	East Bayside Mobile Food Pantry	3		4	All CA\$H programs end April 5th	5	
6		7	Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	8	Riverton Food Share 10-11am	9	Washington Gardens Mobile Food Pantry	10		11	12	
					FSS Orientation 10:00 am							
13		14	Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	15		16		17		18	19	
					Taxes Due April 15th					No School for Portland Youth		
					FSS Orientation 5:00 pm							
Contact PHA by Monday the 21st if you want to apply to the Allen R. Andrews Scholarship	20	Patriots Day Offices Closed	21	Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	22	Riverton Food Share 10-11am	23		24	25	26	
					CHEETA starts SV/RP/KP							
					School Break for Portland Public Schools April 18th to April 25th							
27		28	Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	29		30	Contact us to join one of our virtual FSS Orientations Calshir Richerson, Grants Program Manager Tel: (207)-221-8069 cricherson@porthouse.org					

May 2025

Two More housing Scholarships will be available soon! For the most up to date information about housing scholarships, or to sign up for notifications, visit the PHA website: www.porthouse.org/scholarship				1	2	3
4	5 Allen R. Andrews Scholarship Due	6 Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	7	8 East Bayside Mobile Food Pantry	9	10
11	12 Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	13	14 Washington Gardens Mobile Food Pantry Riverton Food Share 10-11am	15 Tom Valleau (PHA) Scholarship Due	16	17
18	19 Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Sagamore Food Share 9-10am	27	28	29	30 Housing Authority Insurance Group Scholarship Due	31

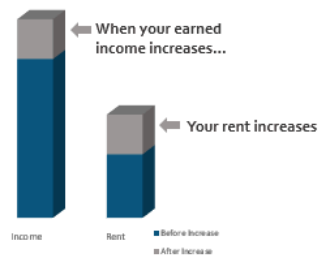
Thrive Together: Join the Family Self-Sufficiency Revolution!!

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program is designed to help families become more independent by giving them the tools and support they need to reach their goals. It helps people get better jobs, finish their education, and save money for important things like buying A house or starting a business.

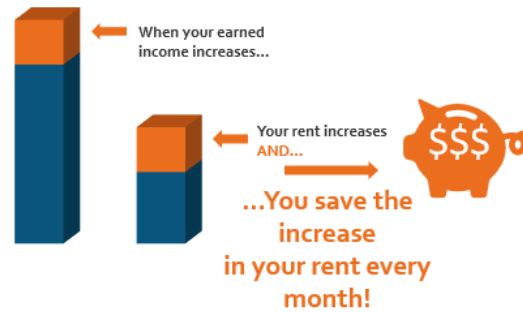
How the FSS Savings Account Works

When you receive federal housing assistance, your rent is based on your income.

That means:



When you enroll in the FSS program...



Families who join the program work with a coordinator who helps them set goals. These goals might include things like getting a high school diploma, learning new job skills, or improving their credit. As they work toward these goals, the program helps them by providing advice, training, and sometimes even scholarships.

One important part of the FSS program is that as families start earning more money, part of their rent is put into a special savings account called an escrow account. This “escrow” money grows over time and can be used for big things, like buying a home, when they graduate from the program. In short, the FSS program is about helping families get the skills, support, and savings they need to become self-sufficient and create better lives for themselves.

Read on to find out how one of our most recent graduates benefited from the program.

Enroll Now

We want to help you accomplish your goals! Join our next Virtual Info Sessions: March 19th @5PM & April 16th @5PM

Contact: Calshir Richerson,

Grants Program Manager: cricherson@porthouse.org

or call 207-221-8069 to sign up.



CELEBRATING SUCCESS WITH FSS



FSS Celebrations

We are excited to announce that the FSS Program has begun hosting Celebration Dinners to honor and recognize participants who have successfully completed their goals and graduated. These special events are designed to shine a light on the hard work and dedication of our participants. Look out for your invitation soon – we can't wait to celebrate with you!

Share your successes in your next quarterly meeting!

Learning Without Limits: FSS Participant in Progress!

Mohamud arrived in the United States from Somalia as a refugee in 2014, speaking very little English. He moved into the Public Housing Authority (PHA) and began working hard to build a better life for himself and his family. In 2019, he joined the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program. Since then, Mohamud has made significant progress. He earned his Commercial Driver's License (CDL), graduated high school, and completed ESOL courses, becoming fully proficient in English. Education has been an important tool for change in his life, and he's modeled the importance of it for his children, one of whom was awarded a PHA scholarship and both of whom are now full-time college students.

When asked how the FSS Program has helped, Mohamud said, "FSS staff gives good advice, and the escrow helps me save money." He appreciates the guidance and financial support the program provides. He encourages others to join the program, saying, "I would tell people to come to Housing and talk to Feza."

Mohamud's story is one of hard work, determination, and the support that has helped him, and his family thrive. We're so proud of him! Keep going, Mohamed!

FREE TAX PREP

WITH

CASH
MAINE



There's still time to get your taxes done for free through the CA\$H program, and you have options. Which one is right for you?

Option 1: In-Person Appointment: Please plan ahead, as appointments typically last 1 to 1.5 hours. Schedule your appointment at UWSM's Portland office by visiting uwsme.org/tax-appointment or by calling **207-347-2335**.

Option 2: Fully Virtual Service: Start the process online by visiting getyourrefund.org/gpmaine

Option 3: File your taxes yourself at myfreetaxes.com with access to a helpline for support.



Option 4: Starting January 27, simply visit a Scan & Go site, pick up an intake packet, return to have your documents scanned, and get assistance from our team to complete your filing.

You can find Scan & Go locations at cPort Credit Unions in Portland (Middle St., Forest Ave, and Riverside locations) and Scarborough (Route 1), as well as the **Portland Housing Authority Sagamore Village Study Center (21 Popham St., Right side of the Community Building on Wednesdays from 9-12 and 1-3:30).**



Curious About **College?** Need assistance with **paying for school?**

Maine Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) can help!

MEOC is a federal TRIO program focused on college access and funding issues. TRIO programs support students who face barriers to college attendance and may even be the first generation of their family to go to college. Since 1991, MEOC has helped over 19,000 Maine residents enroll in higher education.

MEOC services are **100% free** and tailored to a student's individual needs and interests. It doesn't matter what college or undergraduate degree program you are interested in; MEOC is here to help! Typical supports include:

- **completion of college applications,**
- **FAFSA filing,**
- **scholarship searching, and**
- **default loan resolution**

TRIO
EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY CENTER

while also providing referrals to other community based resources that may be of help. If a student has questions, concerns, or barriers related to the college access and financing process, MEOC is committed to assist!

Interested in help or more information? **Randi Paine** is the southern Maine advisor for MEOC. Randi may be reached at randi.paine@maine.edu or **207-356-3485 (call/text)**. Randi regularly meets with folks at Portland Adult Education, the Portland Career Center, or by Zoom and phone. You may also fill out a quick intake form online to be connected directly to Randi: <https://meoc.maine.edu/application/>

Due to federal funding requirements, to be eligible for MEOC services, students must be financial aid eligible and not yet hold the equivalent of a US Bachelor's Degree.

Summer Camp Opportunities

If you're looking for summer opportunities for your child, we've got you covered! Now is the perfect time to explore and enroll in summer camps and activities happening in the community. Keep in mind that enrollment deadlines vary by program, **with most closing in March**. Be sure to check out Portland Rec's offerings, and if you need more options, visit Maine Camps for a wider selection of programs. Start planning today to ensure your child has a fun and enriching summer!

Portland Rec Camp Venture

Registration opens March 4th, 2025 at 8:30am in person at:

Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department
212 Canco Rd, Suite A
Portland, ME 04103

Or online at: <https://portlandme.myrec.com>



by creating a household account and completing the application. When registering your children, please register them using their current grade (grade they are in for the school year 2024/25).

Maine Summer Camp Search

Easily search from over 140 summer camp listings from around Maine at [MaineCamps.org](https://mainecamps.org). You can filter the camps by Camp Type, Population Served, Session Length, Tuition per Week, Transportation, Activities, and more!



Scan the QR code or visit <https://mainecamps.org/find-a-camp/>

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address label