

# Shelter Assistance

## Mission

To assist families striving for self-sufficiency and adequate shelter by maintaining a network of housing-related programs that includes emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, rental housing, home ownership, and heating/cooling assistance.

## Summary of Activities

The **Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)** provides various shelter assistance programs to families and individuals. Housing assistance is available on several levels to assist families who are in a housing crisis, to prevent a crisis from developing, and to transition families into stable living circumstances.

On a crisis level, the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program provides services to families and individuals who do not have a fixed, regular, safe place to live, or who are in immediate danger of becoming homeless. Grants to homeless shelters support the maintenance and operation of facilities to provide basic shelter, as well as services pertaining to employment, health, education, permanent housing, childcare, and job training. ESG funds also serve to prevent homelessness with such assistance as security deposits, first month's rent, utility arrearages, and mediation programs for landlord-tenant disputes.

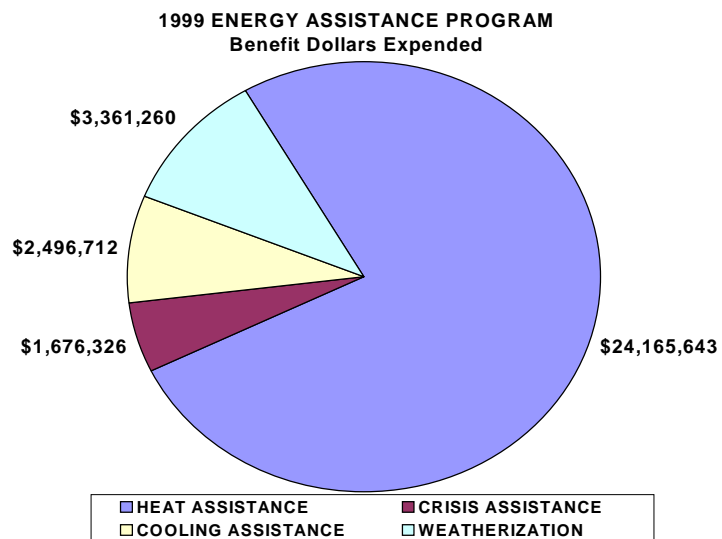
In some instances, a family may not be in crisis but may be in need of help with shelter expenses in order to prevent falling into a crisis situation. The Section 8 rental assistance program helps very low income families and individuals maintain a safe and stable residence by paying a portion of the household rental expenses each month.

As a component of Section 8 services, the Family Self-Sufficiency program utilizes public and private sector services and resources to help residents of subsidized housing achieve economic independence. By stabilizing housing and offering case management, this program permits families to invest their energy into other efforts, including education and job training necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. Participants in the program are provided with an opportunity to save for the future through an interest-bearing escrow account. After a family successfully completes the program, they can withdraw the balance to be used in any manner.

To further stabilize shelter costs, the Energy Assistance Program provides assistance to low-income households to maintain utility service and promote energy conservation. Households can apply for assistance with home heating or cooling expenses or for services to increase home energy efficiency. Maintenance of utility services leads to a more stable living environment, reduced energy costs, and the prevention of health problems related to loss of utility services.

## External Factors

Shelter assistance programs are impacted by changing market rates for housing. The federal Housing and Urban Development agency conducts an annual Fair Market Rent analysis to determine nationwide market rental rates. When appropriate, FSSA adjusts its rental rates to accommodate this analysis. The energy assistance programs are also impacted by fluctuations in energy prices and extreme weather conditions. For example, in 1999 the federal government made approximately \$7.1 million in additional funding available to Indiana to address cooling needs during the extremely hot summer. In 2000, a total of \$14.9 million in additional funding was released to Indiana by the federal government to help low income families faced with the dual difficulties of a particularly cold winter and high natural gas prices.



There are inherent difficulties in obtaining a true picture of the homeless population in Indiana. Many of the families and individuals that could benefit from these programs seek housing assistance from family and friends. They are unaware that agencies, facilities, and supportive services are available to assist them in becoming self-sufficient. Most agencies that provide comprehensive services are located in urban areas leaving those families in rural counties few options when seeking assistance.

## Evaluation and Accomplishments

FSSA has responded to the needs of those needing assistance by promoting the development of shelter and supportive services, especially in rural areas. The number of emergency shelters in the state has increased by 15. Nearly 100,000 households are assisted each year with utility assistance. Thousands of victims of domestic violence have been helped by emergency shelter services, and hundreds of families have been helped to overcome shelter problems to become self-sufficient.



FSSA has also collaborated with other agencies, blending funding to enhance programs. During fiscal year 2000, the number of beds available in shelters was increased by 381, and 42,352 people were served at an average cost of \$38.73 per person. An initial data analysis indicates that there are more beds available around the state and more dollars were spent per individual than in past program years.

## Plans for the Biennium

The Division of Family and Children will work to further enhance the Family Development Program, which identifies eleven family lifestyle areas and aids Family Development Specialists (FDS) in measuring a family's progress toward self sufficiency in those areas. Forty-four families have been enrolled in the FDS program as of July 1, 2000, with a goal of serving 315 families by September 30, 2001. Eight Community Action Agencies are participating in this program serving 35 counties currently, with a goal of expanding the FDS program to all counties statewide. Blending funds from existing programs, including the Community Services Block Grant, will provide housing stability to families while also assisting them in reaching independence and self sufficiency.

<i>Program: 0315</i>	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
<b>Appropriation (All Funds)</b>	<b>\$50,931,314</b>	<b>\$63,649,647</b>	<b>\$63,574,405</b>	<b>\$61,765,773</b>	<b>\$61,821,435</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>\$53,431,084</b>	<b>\$59,518,713</b>	<b>\$59,650,082</b>		

**Sources of Funds  
FY 2001 (Approp)**

■ General   
 ■ Dedicated   
 ■ Federal   
 ■ Other

97%    2%    1%

**Uses of Funds  
FY 2001 (Approp)**

■ Personal Services   
 ■ Distributions   
 ■ Capital   
 ■ Other

96%    3%    1%