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NEWS RELEASE

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HUD Funds Dubuque Family Self-Sufficiency Position

Dubuque, Iowa — The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently awarded \$62,410 to the City of Dubuque to fund a family self-sufficiency (FSS) coordinator position in the City's Housing and Community Development Department. The grant was part of \$57 million awarded to hundreds of public housing authorities to promote family self-sufficiency.

HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Program (HCV-FSS) helps public housing authorities across the country to hire or retain more than 1,000 service coordinators who work directly with families receiving housing assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The service coordinators help connect families to the supportive services that meet their individual needs and to gain access to education, job training and employment.

"This is a modest investment that can make a world of difference for families looking to find their path to self-sufficiency," said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. "As America's economy continues to recover, it's critical that we work to make sure every American has the skills and resources they need to successfully compete for jobs in the 21st century."

The grant awarded to Dubuque will fund all expenses for one year for one of the City's three full-time FSS coordinators. In 2013, three City of Dubuque FSS coordinators worked with 153 families, meeting monthly to provide support services including

financial and homeownership counseling, job search and retention training, and resource referral to prepare them for economic self-sufficiency, including the possibility of homeownership.

The City of Dubuque is expanding its FSS Program by incorporating and including the Circles® Initiative programs, which promote economic empowerment and assist families in creating their own personal paths out of poverty, expanding opportunities, making connections, and eliminating barriers within the community and their families.

Through the program, the City of Dubuque and the head of each participating family enter into a five-year FSS contract of participation that specifies the rights and responsibilities of both parties, as well as goals and services for each family. HUD requires that two goals be met through FSS, the first of which is to seek and maintain suitable employment. The second is that all members of the household be free of cash welfare for 12 consecutive months prior to graduating from the program. Participants are able to set other goals according to their personal plans and ambitions. An interest-bearing FSS escrow account is established for each eligible participating family. Families earn escrow if their portion of the monthly rent is increased due to an increase in the households' earned income. The escrow is credited to this account monthly during the term of the contract. Once the family completes the contract, the balance of the escrow account is paid to the head of the family. Most participants complete their contracts within two and a half years.

For more information on the City of Dubuque Family Self-Sufficiency Program, call 563-589-4230 or visit www.cityofdubuque.org/fss.

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