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NEWS RELEASE

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Dubuque Receives HUD Grant for Family Self-Sufficiency Program

DUBUQUE, Iowa –The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently awarded the City of Dubuque \$132,478 for use in its Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. FSS is a federal program designed to support low-income families assisted through the Housing Choice Voucher program who want to become financially self-sufficient.

HUD announced Monday it had awarded a total of \$1,289,238 in grants to housing agencies across the state of Iowa through the FSS program. Dubuque's grant of \$132,478 will allow the City's FSS coordinators to work with social service agencies, community colleges, businesses, and other local partners to help public housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher Program participants increase their education and/or gain skills that will enable them to obtain employment and advance in their current work.

The FSS program offers a variety of activities aimed at increasing participants' abilities in education, employment, parenting, and financial skills. Participants are paired up with an FSS coordinator who provides support and resources necessary to achieving goals. Program participants sign a five-year contract that requires the head of household to obtain employment and that no member of the FSS family is receiving cash welfare assistance at the end of the five-year term. An interest-bearing escrow account is established on behalf of FSS participants, with the amount based on increases in the family's earned income during the term of the FSS contract. If the family successfully completes its FSS contract, the family receives the escrow funds, which can be used for any purpose, including improving credit scores, paying educational expenses, or a down-payment on a home. Ninety percent of Dubuque FSS graduates are no longer on City of Dubuque housing assistance.

For more information about Dubuque's Family Self-Sufficiency program, contact the City of Dubuque Housing and Community Development department at 563-589-4230 or visit www.cityofdubuque.org/FSS.

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