

# FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY NEWSLETTER

Volume 3: Spring Has Sprung



## FSS Program Reminders:

1. Have you made progress towards your goals?
2. Remember: working is a REQUIREMENT of the program. You can't build escrow without increasing your earned income!
3. Have you met with your FSS Counselor this year? If not, reach out!
4. Have you made the switch to our new FSS contract? It could be beneficial to you! (See Page 3)

### FSS PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Office Hours:

Tues-Thurs: By appt only

Friday: Walk-ins taken 1-5pm

[kayla@mchaor.org](mailto:kayla@mchaor.org)



## SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

By Kayla Burton, Lead FSS Program Coordinator



**As we embrace the arrival of spring, it's the perfect time to rejuvenate our homes, careers, and financial goals. In this edition, we're excited to share valuable tips and resources to support your journey towards self-sufficiency.**

**With spring cleaning on the horizon, we'll provide insightful tips and tricks to refresh your living space and create a harmonious environment for your family. Additionally, we'll highlight upcoming job fairs and opportunities to help you advance your career aspirations.**

**As tax season approaches, we understand the importance of navigating this process effectively. That's why we'll share essential tips for tackling your taxes with confidence, ensuring you maximize your returns and financial stability.**

**Join us as we embark on this journey towards empowerment and self-sufficiency. Together, we'll continue to build brighter futures for ourselves and our families.**

# Congrats to our most recent FSS Graduate!

In the heart of our community, a tale of resilience and triumph shines brightly. Our most recent FSS graduate prefers her identity remain hidden, but we couldn't wait to share the incredible journey of our latest Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) graduate.

Just five short years ago, she embarked on her FSS adventure with determination but faced daunting hurdles – no earned income, a low credit score, and dreams yearning for fulfillment but lacking a clear roadmap.

Today, her transformation is nothing short of spectacular! With boundless determination and unwavering commitment, she has defied the odds and achieved what once seemed impossible.

With sheer determination, our graduate not only increased her household income by nearly 60%, but also

earned a degree, showcasing her unwavering dedication to self-improvement and growth. Equally impressive is her remarkable turnaround in credit score, a testament to her financial discipline and savvy.

But the most thrilling chapter of her journey is yet to unfold. Armed with her graduation escrow check of over \$17,000, she's poised to take the next monumental step – purchasing her family's very first house. It's a dream she's nurtured and pursued with relentless determination, and now, it's within arm's reach.

As we celebrate her remarkable achievements, we're reminded of the profound impact of programs like FSS. Beyond offering resources and support, they empower individuals to rewrite their narratives, break free from adversity, and chart a course towards a brighter tomorrow.

To our graduate, whose name remains secret but whose accomplishments radiate brightly, we extend our heartfelt congratulations. Your journey ignites hope and inspiration within us all, and we eagerly anticipate the vibrant chapters yet to be penned. May your new home be a beacon of joy, resilience, and boundless opportunity!



# Have you switched

to the new FSS contract?



## HAVE YOU SWITCHED YET?

Have you transitioned to the recently introduced FSS contract? The updated program rules have ushered in a fresh contract opportunity, offering numerous advantages for program participants. Continue reading to discover how it can be advantageous for you.

## BENEFITS

- ✓ Simplified graduation requirements
- ✓ Household members other than the head of household can now apply
- ✓ More flexibility with contract extensions
- ✓ May increase program length, and therefore escrow

## FAQ

### Will this affect my current status?

No! Signing a new contract will not negatively impact your status with the program in any way. In fact, it likely will benefit you!

### How can I get signed up with the new contract?

Reach out to your FSS Program Coordinator. They will schedule an appointment with you to set up and sign the new contract. If you are unable to come in person, this can also be done virtually.

### Is it a requirement that I sign the new contract?

It is NOT required! However, most participants will see benefits towards switching.

# SPAGHETTI AND ZUCHINNI \*MEATBALLS



## Directions

With the ever-rising cost of groceries, reducing the amount of meat your family eats is one of the easiest ways to cut costs. Check out this meatless recipe below. It's a great way to get your kids to eat their veggies!

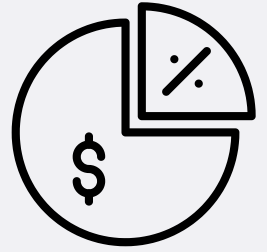
### INGREDIENTS

- *COOKING SPRAY*
- *1 TSP OLIVE OIL*
- *2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED*
- *1 1/4 LBS UNPEELED ZUCCHINI, GRATED*
- *1/2 TSP KOSHER SALT*
- *1/8 TSP BLACK PEPPER*
- *3 TBSP CHOPPED BASIL, PLUS LEAVES FOR GARNISH*
- *1 CUP ITALIAN SEASONED BREADCRUMBS*
- *1 LARGE EGG, BEATEN*
- *1 OUNCE 1/4 CUP PECORINO ROMANO CHEESE, FRESHLY GRATED, PLUS MORE FOR SERVING*
- *2 CUPS QUICK MARINARA SAUCE OR JARRED,*
- *PART SKIM RICOTTA CHEESE, FOR SERVING (OPTIONAL)*

- Heat the oven to 375°F. Spray a large rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
- Place the olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. When hot add the garlic and saute until golden, about 30 seconds.
- Add the zucchini, season with salt and pepper and cook on high heat until all the water evaporates from the skillet, 5 to 7 minutes.
- Transfer to a colander to get rid of any excess water, then to a large bowl along with the bread crumbs, beaten egg, Romano cheese and chopped basil.
- Form the zucchini mixture into 16 balls about 1 oz each, rolling tightly and transfer to the prepared baking sheet. Spray the top and bake until firm and browned, about 20 to 25 minutes.
- Heat the sauce in a large deep skillet to warm the sauce, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the meatballs to the sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.
- Garnish the meatballs with fresh basil leaves and serve with ricotta or grated cheese if desired.



# Expense Tracking



Welcome to the first installment of our newsletter series on mastering your finances! Today, we're diving into the essential first step toward financial empowerment: understanding your monthly expenses.

To kickstart your journey to financial clarity, we're providing you with a monthly expense tracker. This tool will help you log every single purchase and bill you encounter throughout the month. By meticulously documenting your expenditures, you'll gain invaluable insights into your spending habits and financial obligations.

## Instructions:

1. Remove this monthly expense tracker from this packet. If you need a new one, contact your FSS coordinator.
2. Carry it with you wherever you go this month.
3. Whenever you make a purchase or receive a bill, jot down the date, description, amount spent, and category.
4. Be thorough and honest – every expense counts!

Stay tuned for the next newsletter, where we'll delve deeper into decoding your spending patterns and charting a course toward financial success. In the meantime, grab your expense tracker and let's take the first step toward financial empowerment together!

Happy tracking!







## Community Partner Spotlight: WorkSource Oregon

**You may already know about WorkSource Oregon, but do you know about their many, FREE workshops available to help you land your dream job?**

- Interview Workshop (Mondays 1:30 - 3:00 pm): Struggling with situational questions or how to address past employment challenges? Let them help you ace your next interview. Register online!
- Virtual Interview Workshop (Tuesdays 3:00 - 4:30 pm): Prepare for virtual interviews by perfecting your lighting, dress, and demeanor. Gain confidence in navigating virtual spaces and pre-recording interviews. Register online!
- Soft Skills Workshop (Wednesdays 1:30 - 3:00 pm): Explore the importance of soft skills in the job market and identify your strengths. Register online to refine your interpersonal abilities!
- Introduction to Resumes Workshop (Thursdays 10:30 am - 12:00 pm): Learn resume essentials, from formatting to content. Don't let your resume hold you back—register online and kickstart your application process!
- Networking Workshop (Fridays 10:30 am - 12:00 pm): Master the art of networking in both virtual and in-person settings. Elevate your job search with effective branding, elevator pitches, and LinkedIn strategies. Register online for expert guidance!
- Successful State Applications Workshop (Every other Tuesday 10:30 am - 12:00 pm): Interested in State of Oregon job opportunities? Learn how to tailor your resume to state job descriptions and navigate the application process. Register online to secure your spot!

**Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/RegisterWSOR>**

# Spring Cleaning Checklist



## General Cleaning

- Sweep and mop or vacuum all floors and rugs
- Dust all surfaces, including furniture, shelves, and decor
- Empty all trash cans and replace liners
- Wipe down all appliances, including the stove, oven, microwave, and refrigerator
- Wipe down mirrors and windows
- Disinfect all high-touch surfaces, such as doorknobs, light switches, and countertops
- Clean and sanitize toilets, sinks, and showers/bathtubs
- Straighten up and organize all living spaces

## Kitchen Cleaning

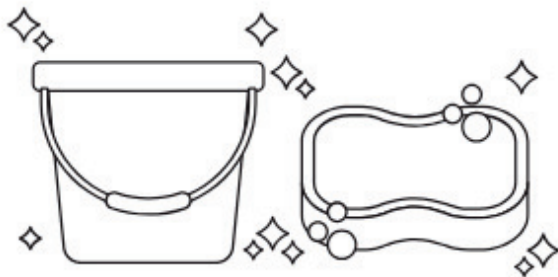
- Clean and sanitize all surfaces where food is prepared, including countertops, cutting boards, and sinks
- Clean the stovetop, oven, and microwave
- Clean and organize the refrigerator and freezer, disposing of expired food items
- Wash dishes and clean the sink

## Bathroom Cleaning

- Clean and sanitize toilets, sinks, and showers/bathtubs
- Clean mirrors, windows, and any other surfaces
- Replace towels and bath mats
- Empty and clean the trash can

## Bedroom Cleaning

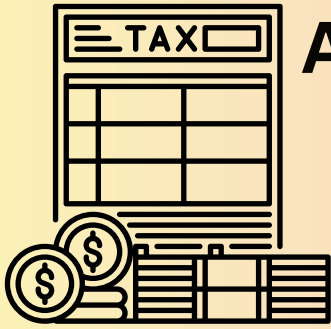
- Change the sheets and pillowcases
- Dust all surfaces, including furniture, shelves, and decor
- Vacuum or sweep the floor and rugs
- Straighten up and organize the closet and dresser



## Other Cleaning Tasks

- Clean windows and screens
- Dust blinds and curtains
- Clean light fixtures and ceiling fans
- Clean and dust baseboards and molding
- Deep clean carpets and upholstery
- Clean and organize the garage or storage areas





# Accessing Free Tax Filing Options: A Guide for FSS Program Participants

Tax season is upon us, and for many families in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, navigating tax filing can be daunting. However, there are numerous free resources available to help you file your taxes accurately and without incurring any costs. Here's a brief guide to accessing these options:

1. **IRS Free File:** If your adjusted gross income was \$73,000 or less in 2021, you qualify for the IRS Free File program. This program allows you to use brand-name tax software to file your federal taxes for free, directly through the IRS website.
2. **Free File Fillable Forms:** Even if your income exceeds \$73,000, you can still use Free File Fillable Forms for basic tax return preparation. These forms are available to all taxpayers and can be accessed through the IRS website.
3. **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA):** VITA offers free tax preparation services to individuals with low to moderate incomes, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and limited English-speaking taxpayers. Look for VITA sites in your community, often located in community centers, libraries, or schools.
4. **Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE):** TCE provides free tax help specifically for taxpayers aged 60 and older. Operated by AARP Tax-Aide volunteers, TCE offers assistance tailored to the needs of older taxpayers.

By taking advantage of these free resources, you can ensure that your taxes are filed accurately and without any financial burden. Don't hesitate to reach out to your Family Self-Sufficiency Program coordinator for additional support or guidance in accessing these services. Remember, filing your taxes doesn't have to be stressful or costly, and with the right resources, you can navigate this process with confidence!

# MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES



## GENERAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Center for Hope and Safety  
503-399-7722 | [hopeandsafety.org](http://hopeandsafety.org)  
This agency offers a safe refuge and support to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking.

Trillium Family Services – Clinical/Therapeutic Services  
888-333-6177  
The team at Shine, in partnership with Mental Health America, has vetted and compiled a wealth of research backed and helpful tools for you: articles, meditations, access to mental health experts, anxiety screenings and more.

Marion County Health and Human Services  
(503) 576-4676  
[www.co.marion.or.us/adultmentalhealth.aspx](http://www.co.marion.or.us/adultmentalhealth.aspx)

Polk County Health and Human Services  
(503) 623-9289

## CRISIS HOTLINES

Lines for Life – Suicide Hotline  
Suicide Lifeline: 800-273-8255 |  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Polk County Behavioral Health  
Crisis Line 503-623-9289  
Weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (excluding holidays)  
Outside of regular business hours (Crisis Services) 503-581-5535

Youth Line: 877-968-8491  
TEXT 'teen2teen' to 839863  
<https://oregonyouthline.org/get-help/> for info and online chat

Northwest Human Services 503-581-5535 | 1-800-560-5535  
[www.northwesthumanservices.org](http://www.northwesthumanservices.org)

The TrevorLifeline  
Crisis resource for LGBTQ+ Youth  
1-866-488-7386  
TrevorText: text Start to 678-678

Psychiatric Crisis Center 503-585-4949



NATIONAL SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE 24HRS/DAY CALL OR TEXT!



# FOOD RESOURCES

LOCAL FOOD BOXES AND MEALS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

## WOODBURN

### AWARE Food Bank

1530 Mt. Hood Ave.  
Woodburn, OR 97071  
(503) 981-5828  
Food Pantry  
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays, 9 a.m. to noon  
1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 3:30-6 p.m.

### St. Luke's SVdP Food Pantry

417 Harrison St.  
Woodburn, OR 97071  
(971) 338-1074  
Food Pantry  
2nd & 4th Thursdays, 5-7 p.m.

## NORTH MARION CO.

### Marion Polk Food Share Mobile Pantry in Hubbard

Rivenes Park  
2600 D St.  
Hubbard, OR 97032  
(503) 576-3448  
Food Pantry  
2nd Wednesdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

### Marion Polk Food Share Mobile Pantry in Aurora

Pythian Hall  
14979 2nd St. NE  
Aurora, OR 97002  
(503) 576-3448  
Food Pantry  
3rd Wednesdays, 3:30-5 p.m.

## SILVERTON

### Mission of Hope at Silver Creek Fellowship

822 Industry Way  
Silverton, OR 97381  
(503) 873-7353  
Food Pantry  
Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m.

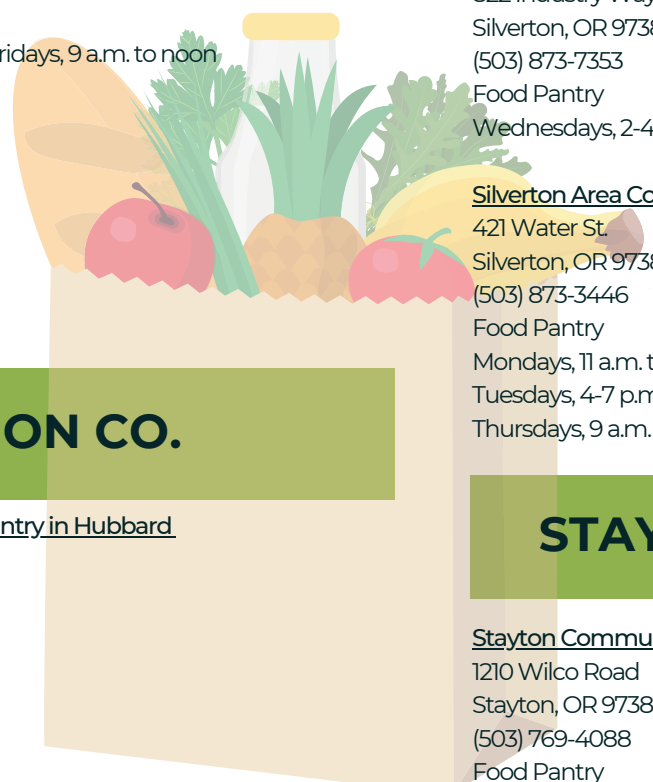
### Silverton Area Community Aid

421 Water St.  
Silverton, OR 97381  
(503) 873-3446  
Food Pantry  
Mondays, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Tuesdays, 4-7 p.m.  
Thursdays, 9 a.m. to noon

## STAYTON

### Stayton Community Food Bank

1210 Wilco Road  
Stayton, OR 97383  
(503) 769-4088  
Food Pantry  
Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon



Scan to find more local food resources!

