

Women and Girls in Public Housing

Family Self Sufficiency Program (MHA) in Marin City

Information provided by Ruth Cashmere, coordinator, Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Marin Housing Authority

FSS/MHA assists public housing residents in becoming economically independent through education, job training, supportive services and employment. This is accomplished through development of individualized action plans and intensive case management over a five-year period.

A gender breakdown in numbers sent by Ms. Cashmere shows 70% of clients served since Jan. '05 are female single parent heads of household (45 of 64); 82% during the current reporting period (36 of 44) are female single parent heads of household. [graphic?]

..."there are challenges in general when meeting the overall needs of women and girls in public housing. Many women or heads of household, working and/or on benefits (many are working poor) simply do not have enough income for basic standards of living in Marin and in the bay area. Some not all of the women we work with reflect generations of poverty, and lack of education or experience to increase income.

"Finances, lack of adequate transportation and maintenance if one owns a car, health (physical, mental), family violence and concerns for their children contribute to depression among many women. However, my experience has led me to believe that the majority of women and girls I met with professionally are highly motivated and have a strong self-assessment of what should be accomplished to obtain goals."