FSS Achievement Metrics (FAM)

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION | FALL 2023

What is FAM?

- The acronym FAM stands for "FSS Achievement Metrics."
- FAM is designed to measure FSS grantee programs' progress in:
  - **Participation** – Serving FSS participants
  - **Earnings** – Helping FSS participants to increase their earned income
  - **Graduation –** Helping FSS participants to graduate from the FSS program and receive their accrued escrow.
- FAM can help PHAs:
  - Understand and track their performance over time
  - Compare their performance to that of other agencies
  - Identify when adjustments may be needed to improve outcomes for families.

What is FAM?

- **Coverage**. HUD calculates FAM for all non-MTW PHAs* that have received FSS NOFO coordinator funding at any point in the past three years.

  o MTW Expansion agencies are included; the FAM spreadsheet identifies them and indicates if FSS flexibilities are in use

- **Timing**. HUD plans to calculate and release new FAM scores once a year.

- **Data sources**. The metrics are based primarily on HUD PIC data submitted by PHAs.

  o HUD also uses Census AMI data to make adjustments, and

  o Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta low wager worker data to index inflation.

What are the purposes of FAM?

- Informing grantees of their metrics will help programs know if they are performing well or underperforming and help programs identify areas for improvement

- FAM will help HUD track trends in the FSS program overall

- Identifying high-performing programs will help HUD identify promising practices that may help all programs excel

- The system meets a regulatory requirement

What's new for 2023?

- FAM was previously known as the "FSS Composite Score"

  - Originally developed in 2017

  - HUD has implemented several adjustment to the metrics in response to feedback from PHAs, HUD staff members, and the public

- Primarily, these adjustments include:

  - Averaging three years of scores for each reporting year to increase stability over time. For example, the 2020 FAM reflect an average of FAM for 2020, 2019, and 2018.

  - Adjusting the earnings measure to account for differences in local economies (based on median area income)

 - Adjusting the earnings thresholds for annual wage growth

What is included in the overall FAM Score?

Calculating the Performance Category from the Score:

Performance Category	Overall Score
1	7.9 to 10
2	4 to 7.89
3	3.5 to 3.99
4	0 to 3.49

Highest Performing ↑

- The overall FAM score is comprised of 3 component metrics:
  - Participation (20%)
  - Graduation (30%)
  - Earnings (50%)

Participation Score — 20%

Graduation Score — 30%

Earnings Score — 50%
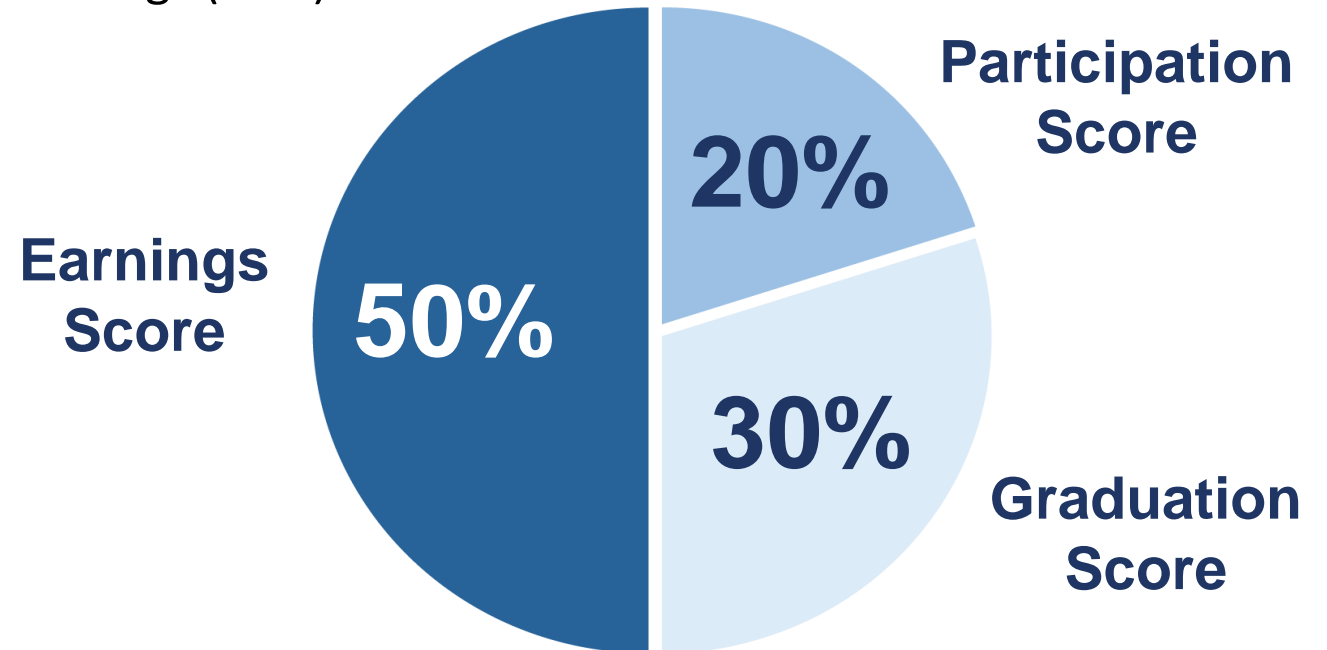
Participation (20% of FAM)

- Calculating the participation measure:

  o The number of FSS participants a PHA serves compared to the minimum number they are expected to serve with their coordinator grant funding

- The participation measure and score are based on the _higher of_:

  o The ratio in the **most recent** year, and

  o The **average** ratio over the **past three years**

Example:

If a PHA receives funding for 2 full-time coordinators it is expected to serve at least 75 families.

If the program serves 100 families, the participation measure calculates: 100 ÷ 75 = 1.33.

Participation (20% of FAM)

Or, by program size:

- HUD uses these standards to determine the minimum number a PHA is expected to serve:

  o First full-time coordinator funded by HUD: 25 participants (15 for a part-time coordinator)

  o Every additional full-time coordinator funded by HUD: 50 participants

Number of FSS Participants	Baseline FSS Program Positions
15-24 families	1 Part-Time Coordinator
25-74 families	1 Full-Time Coordinator
75-124 families	2 Full-Time Coordinators
125-174 families	3 Full-Time Coordinators

Participation (20% of FAM)

- **Tips:** If you start serving more families, it will increase your Participation metric in the next year.

- **Keep in mind:** there may be a tradeoff between caseload size and the coordinators' ability to give each FSS participant sufficient support toward graduation and increased earnings.

Calculating the Score from the Measure:

10 = 2.2 or Higher
9 = 1.95 to 2.19
8 = 1.70 to 1.94
7 = 1.45 to 1.69
6 = 1.20 to 1.44
5 = 0.95 to 1.19
0 = Below 0.95

Graduation (30% of FAM)

- The graduation metric calculates the percent of FSS participants that enrolled 5-8 years ago who have graduated as of the data of the PIC extract.

Calculating the Graduation Score

For the latest 2020 FAM calculations, the measures include PIC data through Dec 31, 2020. The 2020 graduation measure includes households that enrolled in FSS between Jan 1, 2013 and December 31, 2015 (five to eight years before Dec 31, 2020).

The 2020 graduation measure is:

The number who graduated from FSS by Dec 31, 2020

divided by (÷)

The total number of households that enrolled between Jan 1, 2013 and Dec 31, 2015

For example: if **80** households enrolled, and **40** graduated by the end of 2020, the 2020 graduation measure is **40 ÷ 80 = 50%**

Calculating the Score from the Measure:

10 = 42% or Higher
7.5 = 31% to 41.99%
5 = 15% to 30.99%
0 = Below 15%

Graduation (30%)

- Households not included in the graduation measure:

  o Households that enrolled in FSS less than 5 years ago or more than 8 years ago are not included in the calculation.

  o FSS participants who left rental assistance during the analysis period without graduation are not included in the calculation.

  o Household heads that are elderly (62+ at FSS enrollment) *are* included in the numerator but *not* the denominator – in other words, programs get credit for their graduations but do not get penalized if they don't graduate.

Earnings (50% of FAM)

- The Earnings metric measures the extent to which FSS households see earnings growth while participating in the program.

- The Earnings measure accounts for local and recent economic conditions and events in two ways:

  - The score is computed by comparing the earnings growth of each FSS household participating to the earnings growth of 3+ similar households in the same rental assistance program in the same PHA at the same time.

  - Each PHA's earnings measure is also adjusted for differences in Area Median Income across PHAs.

Earnings (50% of FAM)

- The earnings calculations include households who entered FSS 3.5 to 7.5 years before the most recent data of the PIC data used to calculate the measure.

  - Households with less than 3.5 years since FSS enrollment and households with more than 7.5 years since enrolment won't be included in the calculations.

  - This allows participants sufficient time to increase their income, even if programs focus on education first.

For Example

For the latest 2020 FAM calculations – 2020 – the measures include PIC data through Dec 31, 2020.

That 2020 earnings measure includes households that enrolled in FSS between July 1, 2013 and June 20, 2017.

Earnings (50% of FAM)

- The earnings measure compares the family's annual earned income at enrollment (baseline) to the higher of:
  - Their annual earned income **as of the most recent PIC record** or
  - Their **average** annual earnings since enrollment

- This helps ensure that programs won't be penalized for
  - Recent employment loss, injury, or illness if participants saw prior earnings growth, or
  - Slow initial growth but substantial long-term earnings growth stemming from a focus on education first

- Calculation details
  - Heads of household that are elderly (62+ at enrollment) or a person with disability are not included in the calculation
  - The measure uses annual re-examinations only

Calculating the Score from the Measure:

10 = $6,587 or Higher
7.5 = $5,001 to $6,587
5 = $2,381 to $5,001 **or** below $2,381 **without** high confidence
0 = Below $2,381 **with** high confidence

Calculating the overall FAM Score

Calculating the Performance Category from the Score:

Performance Category	Overall Score
1	7.9 to 10
2	4 to 7.89
3	3.5 to 3.99
4	0 to 3.49

For Example:

If an FSS program has a Participation Score of 6, a Graduation Score of 5, and an Earnings Score of 7.5, its overall FAM Score will be:

Participation (6 x 20%) = 1.20 +
Graduation (5 x 30%) = 1.50 +
Earnings (7.5 x 50%) = 3.75 =

___

Overall 6.45

An overall Score of 6.45 corresponds to a FAM Performance Category of 2—the second highest category.

For each measure and this overall scoring, the thresholds used to convert FAM measures to scores will stay the same over time. This will make it easier for PHAs to chart their progress over time. (Only exception: annual adjustment to Earnings thresholds for national changes in low-wage worker earnings).

FAM features to keep in mind

- FAM uses three years of data calculations to composite measures and scores
  - In other words: 2020 FAM uses Earnings Measures with Dec 31, 2020 as the most recent PIC data included, and averages these with the same measures calculated for Dec 2019 as the latest PIC data, and for Dec 2018 as the latest PIC data
  - Averaging three years reduces changes affecting the PHA in just one or two years (e.g., change in FSS coordinator, change in program model or recruitment approach, any local events that the earnings measure doesn't account for)
- For the overall FAM score category, overall FAM score, and each component score (participation, graduation, and earnings), the thresholds used to convert FAM measures to scores will stay the same over time.
  - Only exception: annual adjustment to Earnings scoring thresholds for national changes in low-wage worker earnings
  - Static scores make it easier for PHAs to chart their progress over time
  - If all programs improve their metrics – all programs can get the highest overall score category—there is no limit!

Now, let's take a look through the FAM Spreadsheet

How can I improve my program's score?

✓ Make sure your data are current and accurate

✓ Talk to your Field Office

✓ Make your own assessment of what's driving program scores and performance

✓ Re-examine your FSS Action Plan—make sure you're implementing it as planned, and that it still fits your goals for FSS

✓ Ask your PCC and participating families for ideas on how to strengthen your program.

✓ Explore and implement best practices and promising practices—see HUD-produced products and resources in the wider community of FSS providers! (HUD's FSS Guidebook and Online Training are good places to start)

Resources

- More details:
  - Updated "FSS Composite Score" FR Notice
  - Updated FSS Composite Score Methodology
- Questions?
  - Attend HUD office hours
  - Email HUD