

Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) Program

The ROSS program is designed to help residents set goals, acquire job skills training, further their education and connect with community resources. These steps help residents to find and maintain employment, achieve economic independence and realize housing self-sufficiency. Available to every BRHA resident age 18 or older, participants work with BRHA staff to address personal needs or issues that may deter them from reaching their goals. Assistance may be provided through

BRHA-sponsored events or via referrals to community agencies for needs such as medical, dental or mental health services, GED classes, employment assistance, child care, transportation, life skills training, budgeting assistance and credit counseling.

Profile of SUCCESS

Megan Mann, a single mom in her mid-20s, spent the first 15 years of her life in public housing at BRHA. After moving to Indiana, she found herself back in Bristol at BRHA's Bonham Circle housing development, this time raising her five-year-old daughter, who has significant health issues.

Megan wanted to return to school to equip herself for a life beyond a retail job and public housing, but she had no idea how to take the initial steps to achieve her goal. Then, two years ago, she enrolled in BRHA's ROSS program.

The ROSS program refers participating BRHA residents to other service providers for assistance in helping them work toward increasing their earned income and achieving self-sufficiency. With help from ROSS Coordinator Cindy Haynes, Megan decided to enroll in a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. She completed the program at the end of 2013, passed her board exam, and is now working as a certified nursing assistant at a local nursing home.

"I never saw myself in the medical field," Megan says. "I wanted to be a teacher, but my experience with my daughter really sparked an interest in me."



Megan credits Cindy for providing the support she needed to complete the ROSS program and accomplish this first step in her career plans.

"I'd be less motivated if I hadn't (participated in) this program," she says. "Cindy sent handwritten notes telling me how proud she is of me. (She made) regular phone calls to check in on me. She has really helped me be more motivated and confident."

Megan hopes to continue a career in the medical field and recently began coursework in a medical assistant program. She also hopes to move out of public housing within the next year and a half.

"It is important for people to not use public housing as a lifestyle," Megan says, "but as a means to an end. It should be a stepping stone."