



August 7, 2019

Dear Child Welfare Director:

We write today to share the announcement of the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative. FYI provides an exciting opportunity for communities across the country to build upon efforts to prevent and end homelessness among youth with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement. We know that a significant number of youth who age out of foster care will end up homeless and many more will experience housing instability. The number of youth who are at risk of homelessness or experience homelessness on their path to adulthood is unacceptable, especially when the child welfare system, who acts as these young people's legal guardians, has failed to identify permanent housing options.

On July 26, 2019, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released Notice PIH 2019-20,¹ explaining the eligibility and application requirements for funding under this initiative. HUD will provide housing choice vouchers (HCVs) for youth who are otherwise eligible under the Family Unification Program (FUP), in communities where FUP is not administered.

This initiative is designed to address three primary goals:

1. **Address gaps in the availability of FUP for youth** in communities that do not administer FUP.
2. **Prioritize this resource for youth** and young adults.
3. **Contribute to the goal of ending youth homelessness** as outlined in *Home, Together: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*.

Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), partnering with child welfare agencies, current and former foster youth, and Continuums of Care (CoC), may request HCVs in the form of tenant protection vouchers (TPVs) to assist eligible youth for a period of up to 36 months. These TPVs will allow a qualifying young person to choose and lease privately-owned rental housing. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly on behalf of the participating youth. The young person then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Generally, the youth must pay 30 percent of his or her monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities.

PHAs that currently administer the HCV program and do not administer FUP may apply for assistance on behalf of a young person.²

HUD and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) hosted a joint webinar on FYI earlier this month. The webinar is now available on the FYI webpage.³ This webinar provides more information on the application process and other important information. We encourage you to begin conversations to prepare for this exciting opportunity to support the needs of transition-aged youth at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.

¹ https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/publications/notices

² A list of PHAs that administer FUP, and are therefore not eligible to participate in FYI may be found at the following link:

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/fyi_tpv

³ https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/fyi_tpv

Who may be assisted?

The population eligible to be assisted with funding under FYI are youth certified by a child welfare agency as meeting the following conditions:

1. Has attained at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age;
2. Left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act at age 16 or older; and
3. Is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless.

Eligibility is not limited to single persons. For example, pregnant and/or parenting youth are eligible to receive assistance under this notice, assuming they otherwise meet eligibility requirements.

What Will Be Required of Child Welfare Agencies?

- Enter into a partnership agreement with the PHA.
- Have a system for identifying FUP-eligible youth within the agency's caseload and review referrals from the PHA and CoC.
- Given the limited nature of the resource, have a system for prioritization of referrals to ensure that youth are prioritized for a FYI TPV based upon level of need and appropriateness of the intervention.
- Provide written certification to the PHA that a youth is FUP-eligible.
- Provide or secure a commitment for the provision of required supportive services for the length of assistance (36 months).

What will be required of the PHA?

- The PHA is required to administer the FYI TPV and to counsel the youth on the requirements of the program.
- The PHA must accept referrals of youth certified by the PCWA as eligible for assistance under the initiative.
- The PHA must determine if youth referred by the PCWA are eligible for HCV assistance.

Why is participation in this initiative important?

We invite you to consider whether this initiative provides an opportunity for your agency and community to further develop the options available for young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. To request additional information for:

- Public Housing Authorities, please email: FYITPV@hud.gov
- Child Welfare Agencies, please email Jeremy Long at Jeremy.Long@acf.hhs.gov

Thank you for consideration of this important opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Hunter Kurtz', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

R. Hunter Kurtz
Assistant Secretary
for Office of Public and Indian Housing
Department of Housing and Urban Development

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Lynn A. Johnson'.

Lynn A. Johnson
Assistant Secretary
Administration for Children and Families
Department of Health and Human Services