



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-1000

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL  
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Honorable Joyce Beatty  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0001

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Dear Representative Beatty:

On behalf of Secretary Castro, thank you for your letter proposing that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) implement the Foster Alumni Supportive Housing (FASH) demonstration - a demonstration program modeled on the HUD-Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) that would combine a housing choice voucher with case management and clinical services where needed for youth experiencing homelessness. The goal of HUD-FASH is to prevent homelessness among youth by providing housing stability and increased opportunities for youth who have left foster care and are at risk of homelessness. The following information is from HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development.

HUD is committed to ending homelessness among youth, and is continually interested in identifying new and innovative solutions that aid in achieving this goal, such as HUD-FASH, particularly if they can prove to be cost-effective. HUD's Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget request to Congress reiterates its commitment to ending homelessness, but full implementation of a demonstration program as outlined in the HUD-FASH proposal would be dependent on additional Congressional authorization and funding that had not been requested by HUD in its FY 2016 budget request. Nonetheless, Ohio stakeholders could consider constructing a meaningful program within existing statutory authority that achieves similar objectives. For example, existing authority in HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) Program and Family Unification Program (FUP) allows communities to prioritize housing and services to homeless youth. Additionally, each public housing agency (PHA) currently has the flexibility to establish housing preferences for its Housing Choice Voucher or Public Housing programs, and could opt to create a preference for youth aging out of the foster care system who are at risk of homelessness. These possibilities are outlined below.

#### HUD's Homeless Assistance Programs

HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development provides over \$2 billion annually for homeless assistance through over 8,000 grants that serve people experiencing homelessness. Since 1994, HUD has been encouraging communities to join together to address the problems of homelessness in a coordinated and comprehensive approach through the creation of CoC homeless assistance planning requirements. Once a CoC determines the gaps in its housing and service delivery system, it focuses resources on developing a plan to meet the identified needs of specific homeless subpopulations within its geographic boundaries. HUD does not directly provide this assistance, but rather makes funds available to States, local governments, and private nonprofit organizations through a competitive CoC grant application process. These organizations administer

HUD-funded programs to assist individuals and families to move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency.

As part of its FY 2015 CoC Program Competition, HUD will be prioritizing funding for and providing incentives to CoCs that employ strategies designed to end youth homelessness, including creating additional permanent housing opportunities for youth. These strategies will help HUD reach the goal stated in “Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness to end youth homelessness by 2020.” However, without new authority, HUD must work within its existing programs, including both its dedicated homeless programs and its mainstream housing programs to reach this goal.

### The Family Unification Program (FUP)

In cooperation with local PHAs, there are actions that communities can take right now to prioritize resources for youth who have left foster care and are at risk of homelessness.

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing allocates funding for the FUP. This program is administered by PHAs, and provides housing choice vouchers to:

- Families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in:
  - a. The imminent placement of the family’s child or children in out-of-home care; or
  - b. The delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care; and
- Youth at least 18 years old and not more than 21 years old who left foster care at age 16 or older and who lack adequate housing. FUP vouchers used by youth are limited by statute to 18 months of housing assistance.

PHAs administer FUP in partnership with Public Child Welfare Agencies (PCWAs) that are responsible for referring FUP families and youths to the PHA for determination of eligibility for rental assistance. In addition to rental assistance, supportive services must be provided by the PCWA to FUP youths for the entire 18 months in which the youth participates in the program.

FUP funding is allocated through a competitive process; therefore, not all PHAs administer the program. Seventeen PHAs in Ohio administer FUP with a total allocation of 974 vouchers. HUD last received funds from Congress to expand the number of FUP vouchers in 2010.

HUD’s FY 2015 Appropriations included a demonstration program that would allow HUD to waive certain aspects of the FUP requirements found in Section 8(x) of the U.S. Housing Act to encourage PHAs to offer FUP-eligible youth the opportunity to participate in the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program. The authority grants HUD the ability to waive limitations that may make it difficult to connect eligible youth to a FSS program, including the time limit for assistance. Participation would be limited to PHAs that currently administer both FUP and an FSS program. The 17 PHAs in Ohio that administer FUP also administer FSS. HUD’s FY 2015

Appropriations did not include an allocation of new FUP Vouchers. HUD is currently developing the framework for this demonstration.

Creating a Preference for Youth Aging out of the Foster Care System who Are At Risk of Homelessness

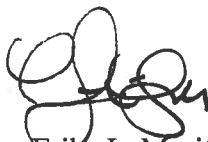
Within existing authority, PHAs can prioritize youth aging out of the foster care system who are at risk of homelessness by establishing a preference in their admissions policies in both the Public Housing and HCV programs. PHAs can limit the preference to referrals by a partnering organization that provides case management and clinical services allowing communities to offer something similar to HUD-FASH, but within their existing resources.

FY 2016 Budget

HUD supports providing appropriate, tailored housing and services for former foster youth, and the President's FY 2016 Budget requested \$20 million for new FUP vouchers, a portion of which would be used to serve youth. The FY 2016 Budget also proposed to extend the time frame that youth could keep the voucher to 60 months. In addition, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved language in its FY 2016 Transportation, HUD Appropriations Bill that includes several provisions to expand and improve the delivery of HUD housing and services for homeless youth, including \$20 million to support more than 2,500 new family unification vouchers to prevent youth exiting foster care from becoming homeless. The language also provides an additional \$40 million to test comprehensive efforts to end youth homelessness in urban and rural areas. These efforts will provide exciting opportunities to make an impact on preventing and ending homelessness among youth who have left foster care.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Erika L. Moritsugu  
Assistant Secretary for Congressional  
and Intergovernmental Relations